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NOTES,

CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL,

ON THE BOOK OF

EXODUS;

DESIGNED AS A GENERAL HELP TO

BIBLICAL READING AND INSTRUCTION.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *Title, Author, Scope, &c.*

: designation given in our version to the second book of the Pentateuch, Exodus,' is derived directly from the Greek εξοδος, *exodos*, varying only by atinised termination *us* for *os*. The import of the term is that of *going emigration, departure*, and is significant of the principal event recorded in wit, the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. According to w usage, though no where in the text itself, it is called ואלה שמות *ve-shemoth, and these are the names*, from the initial words of the book. This e, however, is sometimes abbreviated by the Jewish writers to the simple שמות *shemoth, the names.*

at the authorship of this book is rightly ascribed to Moses, is proved by the nents which go to ascertain the entire Pentateuch as the production of his . These are so fully detailed in our Introduction to Genesis, that it will be cessary to repeat them here. But we have in addition still more explicit ence on this point. Moses testifies of himself, Ex. 24. 4, that he 'wrote all words of the Lord,' commanded him on a certain occasion, which words are ained in this book. Our Savior, also, when citing, Mark 12. 26, a certain age from this book, calls it 'the book of Moses.' And again, Luke 20. 37, ays, 'Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush.' It is eover to be observed that the books of the Old Testament are spoken of in New, Luke 15. 31, as divided into two grand classes, 'Moses and the proph- ' and in v. 16, 'the law and the prophets;' so that all the Scriptures, besides prophets,' were written by Moses; in other words, the four books of the ' were written by him. There remains, therefore, no room for doubt that ses wrote the book of Exodus, and if any thing more were necessary to estab- its canonical character, it would be found in the fact mentioned by Rivet, t twenty-five passages are quoted from it by Christ and his Apostles in express ms, and nineteen as to the sense.

As to the general scope of the book, it is plainly to preserve the memorial of great facts of the national history of Israel in its earlier periods, to wit, their liverance from Egypt, the kindness and faithfulness of God in their subsequent eservation in the wilderness, the delivery of the Law, and the establishment of new and peculiar system of worship. All the particulars connected with these veral events are given in the fullest and most interesting detail, and in such a nner as to compel in the reader the recognition of an overruling Providence at ery step of the narration. There is perhaps no book in the Bible that records

such an illustrious series of miracles, or that keeps the divine agency so stantly before the mind's eye. Nor are the moral lessons which it teaches prominent and striking. We find the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 10. 11, after h adverted to the course of Israel's experience as a nation, immediately ac 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are wr for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' No soone he adverted to their privileges than he describes their chastisements, as ink to the intent that we should not so imitate their sin, as to provoke a visi of the same vengeance. Indeed their whole history forms one grand predi and outline of human redemption, and of the lot of the church. In the serv of Israel we behold a lively image of the bondage to sin and Satan in whic unregenerate are held captive. In the deliverance from Egypt is foreshown redemption from this horrid thraldom; and the journey through the wilde is a graphic program of a Christian's journey through life to his final inheri in the heavenly Canaan. So also, without minute specification, the man which the Israelites ate, and the rock of which they drank, as well as the bl serpent by which they were healed, were severally typical of correspo particulars under the Christian economy. Add to this, that under the sacr and ceremonial service of the Mosaic institute, were described the distingui features of the more spiritual worship of the Gospel.

It is necessary to bear in mind, if we would adequately understand the of the peculiar institutions which we find prescribed in the pages of this that the grand design of Heaven was to form the Israelites into a distinc independent people, and to unite them in one great political and ecclesias body of whom Jehovah himself was to be the ackowledged head, constit what is familiarly known as the *Jewish Theocracy*. But upon this unique of polity, which never had a parallel in the case of any other nation on earth have reserved a more extended train of remark in the Introduction to the Se Volume of this work, where the reader will find the whole subject amply cussed.

§ 2. *Time occupied by the History, Divisions, &c.*

The period embraced by the history will be seen from the following putation:—

	Years.
From death of Joseph to birth of Moses, ...	60
From birth of Moses to departure from Egypt, ...	81
From departure from Egypt to Tabernacle erected, . . .	1
	142

Some make the period from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses to l years, which will increase the sum total to 145 years, but the difference is slight to make it necessary to state the grounds of either calculation. It is observed, however, that nearly the whole book is occupied in the detail of events which occurred in the last year of the period above mentioned.

According to the Jewish arrangement this book is divided into eleven פרשות *parashoth*, or larger divisions, and twenty סדרים *siderim*, or smaller divisi

n our Bibles it is divided into forty chapters, which, according to the different ubjects treated, may be classified as follows:—

I. The oppression of the Israelites in Egypt, ch. 1.
II. The birth and early life of Moses, ch. 2.
III. The legation of Moses, ch. 3, 4. 1—29.
IV. The mission of Moses, and the infliction of the first eight plagues, ch. 4. 29—10. 21.
V. The institution of the Passover, ch. 12. 1—21.
VI. The conclusion of the ten plagues, ch. 10. 21—12. 21—31.
VII. The exodus, ch. 12. 31—37, and 40—42.
VIII. The wanderings in the wilderness, from Rameses in Egypt to Mount Sinai, ch. 12. 37—40 to ch. 19. 1, 2.
IX. Moses called up into the mount, and the preparation of the people for the renewing of the Covenant, ch. 19.
X. The moral law delivered, ch. 20.
XI. The judicial and ceremonial law delivered, ch. 21—31.
XII. The idolatry of the Israelites, and their punishment with the renewal of the Covenant, ch. 32—34.
XIII. The offerings for and the construction of the tabernacle, ch. 35—39.
XIV. The tabernacle erected, and covered by the cloud of the divine Presence, ch. 40.

§ 3. *Commentators.*

Throughout the great mass of biblical criticism and exposition embodied in our wn and foreign languages, there are comparatively few works devoted to the ook of Exodus alone; nor is it always from these that the student or commenator can expect to derive the most valuable aid. For the most part, the comentaries which embrace either the whole Scriptures, or extended portions of hem, are the store-houses from whence the materials of exegetical illustration re to be sought. Of these the Critici Sacri, the Synopsis of Pool, the Scholia of Rosenmuller, the Annotations of Leclerc, Ainsworth, and Patrick, will always old the chief rank in the estimation of the scholar, next to the Ancient Versions nd Targums contained in Walton's Polyglot. These accordingly have been alvays at hand, as a constant tribunal of reference, through every stage of the rogress of the present work. But it is obvious at a glance, that so vast is the ariety of subjects necessarily brought under review in the course of this book, hat no one class of authorities will by any means suffice for its adequate elucidaion. Philology, Geography, Antiquities, History, Architecture, the arts of Sculpure, Engraving, Dyeing, Weaving, Embroidering, to say nothing of the peculiar ystem of Law, Jurisprudence, and Worship, enjoined upon the Israelites, all pre- er their claims for more or less of illustration at the hands of him who assumes he task of expounding in order the chapters of Exodus. It would scarcely be posible, therefore, to enumerate all the works which have gone to constitute the aparatus for the present undertaking, without citing the entire list of biblical helps ppended to the Introduction to the Notes on Genesis, besides a great multitude f others which are there omitted. In fact, we know of no book in the Bible

that demands so great a diversity of material for its exposition as the second book of the Pentateuch. How far the various and voluminous sources of information, to which the author has had access, have been made available to his grand purpose in the execution of the present work, is a question that awaits the decision of his readers. A very minute specification might invite a more critical comparison, and present a more palpable contrast, between his advantages and his achievement, than would redound to the credit of his work. At the same time, he cannot in candor confess to any conscious lack of effort to do the utmost justice to every part of his self-imposed labor—if that may be called a labor, which has proved, from beginning to end, an unfailing source of pleasure.

The following catalogue is not given as complete, but merely as indicating, in addition to those already specified, the most important collateral aids to a full critical and ethical developement of the sense of this remarkable book.

I. *Jewish and Christiano-Rabbinical Commentators.*

R. Salomonis Jarchi, dicti Raschi, Commentarius Hebraicus, in quinq Libros Mosis, Latine versus atque Notis Critics ae philologicis illustratus Joh. Frederico Breithaupto. Gothæ, 1713. 4to.

Jarchi, or Raschi, as he is usually called from combining, according to Hebre usage, the three initial letters of his name (רשי), is generally placed by tl Jews at the head of their commentators. They call him 'the great light' a 'the holy mouth,' from the value attached to his learned comments on the La and the Prophets. These I have found occasionally to contain some hapl verbal criticisms, and in the account of the construction of the tabernacle, in pa ticular, his remarks are plain, common-sense, and valuable; but in the main indulges in the characteristic silly conceits of the Rabbins, and his style, wi all the aid it derives from Breithaupt's excellent notes and paraphrases, is so o scure as to render him of little service to one who cares not for words withc meaning. He was a native of Troyes in Champagne, and died, A. D. 1180.

R. Isaaci Abarbanelis Commentarius in Pentateuchum Mosis, curâ Henri J. Van Banshuisen. Hanoviæ, 1710. Folio.

Rabbi Abarbanel, or Abravanel, as the name is sometimes written, was Portuguese Jew, who flourished in the fifteenth century, and wrote commentari on the Pentateuch, the whole of the Prophets, and some other books of Scriptu He also is highly esteemed by his countrymen, and though an exceedingly bit enemy of Christianity, yet Father Simon says of him, 'We may, in my opini reap more advantage in Scripture-translation from R. Isaac Abravanel, than fre any other Jew. He has written in an elegant and perspicuous style, althou he is too copious and sometimes affects rhetoric more than strict fidelity to sacred text.' As the volume abovementioned came into my hands only at a v advanced stage of my own work, I have been unable to make any *direct* use it. Through the medium of Rosenmuller and Cartwright, however, his rema have occasionally found their way into my Notes.

Christophori Cartwright Electa Targumico-Rabbinica; sive Annotatio in Exodum ex triplici Targum. Lond. 1653. 8vo.

This is a valuable work, purely critical, made up almost entirely of mater drawn from the Rabbinical commentaries and the Chaldee and other anc versions. It is used much oftener than quoted by Rosenmuller.

Ainsworth's (H.) Annotations upon the Second Book of Moses, called E dus. Lond. 1639. Fol.

This is the second part of the author's invaluable work on the Pentateuch. It is rich in pertinent citations from Jewish sources, and in that kind of verbal criticism which consists in laying open the *usus loquendi* of the original is entirely without a parallel.

LIGHTFOOT'S Handful of Gleanings out of the Book of Exodus. Works (Pitman's Ed. in 13 vols.), Vol. II. p. 351—409.

This is a collection of remarks critical, chronological, historical, and talmudical upon detached portions of Exodus. As in all Lightfoot's works, some of his observations are of considerable value, others of very little.

II. *Christian Commentators.*

WILLETT'S Hexapla in Exodum; that is, a sixfold commentary upon the Book of Exodus, according to the Method propounded in the Hexapla upon Genesis. Lond. 1608. Folio.

A voluminous and tedious Commentary, but not without its value, especially as embodying and usually confuting the interpretations of the Romanists. He compares also the various versions and deduces doctrinal and moral inferences.

RIVETI'S (ANDR.) Opera Theologica. Rotterdam, 1651. 2 Tom. Folio.

The first of these huge volumes contains the author's Exercitations on Genesis and Exodus. They are very elaborate and generally judicious, but marked with the prolixity of the seventeenth century. At the present day they are merely commentaries for commentators.

HOPKINS' (WM.) Corrected Translation of Exodus, with Notes critical and explanatory. Lond. 1784. 4to.

Said to be a work of little value.

III. *Miscellaneous and Illustrative Works.*

PICTORIAL BIBLE with Wood-cuts and Original Notes. Lond. 1836-8. 3 vols. Roy. 8vo.

For a character of this very valuable work see the Preface to my Notes on Genesis. The 'Pictorial History of Palestine,' now in course of publication by the same author, is a work of similar character, and abounding with rich materials for illustrating the Old Testament history.

BUDDICOM'S Christian Exodus, or the Deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, practically considered in a series of Discourses. Lond. 1839. 2 vols. 12mo.

BÄHR'S Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus (Symbolism of the Mosaic Worship). Heidelb. 1837—9. 8vo.

An exceedingly curious and valuable work, entering into the most profound researches respecting the symbolical character of the Tabernacle and Temple ritual.

GRAVES' (RICH.) Lectures on the Four Last Books of the Pentateuch. Lond. 1815, 2 vols. 8vo.

FABER'S (G. S.) Horæ Mosaicæ; or a Dissertation on the Credibility and Theology of the Pentateuch. Lond. 1818. 2 vols. 8vo.

The leading object of this work is to establish the authenticity of the Pentateuch, by pointing out the coincidence of its facts and statements with the remains of profane antiquity, and their connexion with Christianity. It is a production of great value to the biblical student.

——— Treatise on the Patriarchal, Levitical, and Christian Dispensations. Lond. 1823. 2 vols. 8vo.

This Treatise exhibits all the strong masculine sense, and extensive classical erudition that distinguish the author, but from its greater license of hypothesis in particular parts is perhaps generally less esteemed than the 'Horæ Mosaicæ' mentioned above. The attentive reader, however, cannot but derive from it many very important ideas on the subject of sacred antiquity. His refutation of some of Warburton's bold positions is eminently successful.

Outram's (Wm.) Two Dissertations on Sacrifices; translated by Allen. Lond. 1817. 8vo.

A standard work on the subject of which it treats.

Michaelis' (J. D.) Commentaries on the Laws of Moses; translated by Smith. Lond. 1814. 4 vols. 8vo.

The value of this, the main work of its author, depends upon the degree to which it is imbued with the genius of Orientalism, and the sagacity discovered in tracing the connexion between the institutions of Moses and the various influences of climate, manners, hereditary usages, and other national characteristics which may be supposed to have governed their adoption. Its great fault is its treating the Mosaic jurisprudence and ritual as if it originated with Moses rather than with God. It is also occasionally disfigured with a levity and grossness very unsuited to its subject. Yet it throws too much light on the wisdom and design of the Levitical code not to be on the whole a very valuable, as well as very interesting work.

Robinson's (Prof. E.) Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petræa. A Journal of Travels in the year 1838, by E. Robinson, and E. Smith; undertaken in reference to Biblical Geography; with new Maps and Plans. New York, 1841. 3 vols. 8vo.

From no source have I experienced greater regret in looking back upon the execution of my task, than in not having been able, from the late date of its publication, to avail myself of the rich topographical treasures contained in this work. In all that relates to the geography of the land of Goshen, the region of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt; to the route from thence to the Red Sea; to the passage of that sea; to the wilderness of Sin; and to the interesting localities of the Sinai tract, the researches of the American travellers have settled a multitude of disputed points, and in fact opened a new era in the progress of Biblical geography. The very maps themselves are sufficient to have produced this result, even had the matter of the journal been wanting. Both together form a noble contribution to the cause of sacred science, of which the age and the country that have given birth to it may well be proud. The portion of the work which treats of Palestine I have not yet seen, though I am assured by the author that it contains more of *discovery* than any other.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

CHAPTER I.

NOW [a] these *are* the names of the children of Israel, which

[a] Gen. 46. 8.—ch. 6. 14.

came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob.
2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,
3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,

CHAPTER I.

The prominent subject of the book upon which we now enter, as intimated by its title, is the wonderful deliverance of the nation of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. But as this and all the great events in the history of that people were matters of express prediction and promise on the part of God; the sacred writer commences his narrative with a virtual commentary on the promise made to Abraham, Gen. 15. 5, that his seed should from small beginnings eventually become as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sands on the sea shore. Though the migration of Jacob's family from Canaan to Egypt, and the oppression to which they were subjected, would seem to have threatened the complete frustration of the divine purposes in regard to the increase of Abraham's seed, yet the writer shows that notwithstanding it was but a mere handful of that seed that was sown in the adverse soil of Egypt, yet the harvest which sprung from it was vast beyond conception, and such as to illustrate the divine veracity in the most glorious manner. Many interesting incidents had no doubt occurred between the death of Joseph and the incipient bondage of Israel; but these are passed over in silence because they did not bear particularly upon the fulfilment of any special prediction. But God would have nothing lost that was essential to the proof of his faithfulness in his covenant relations. He deems it of more importance to confirm faith than to gratify curiosity.

1. *Now these are the names.* Heb. ואלה שמות *ve-elleh shemoth, and these are the names.* The use of the Hebrew copulative ו *and* is peculiar. Though its ordinary office in a continuous narrative is that of a *connective*, yet it frequently occurs at the beginning of a book where it can have no reference to any thing preceding, as Est. 1. 1, 'Now it came to pass.' Heb. *And* it came to pass. Compare Ruth 1. 1, Ezek. 1. 1. Here, however, as well as in the commencement of the two following books, it is probably to be taken in its connective sense, indicating the continuation of the foregoing narrative. The books of Moses appear not to have been orginally divided, as at present, into five separate portions, but to have constituted one unbroken volume. This is inferred from the manner in which the writings of Moses are quoted in the New Testament, where no such distinction is recognized. See Luke 16. 31. ——¶ *Which came.* Heb. הבאים *habbaim, which* (were) *coming.* See Note on Gen. 46. 8.——¶ *Every man and his household.* Heb. איש וביתו *ish u-betho, every one and his house.* Chal. 'Every one and the men of his household.' On this frequent sense of the term 'house' see Note on v. 21. Gr. εκαστος παν το, *each with his whole household.*

2—4. *Reuben, Simeon,* &c. In this enumeration the sons of the handmaids are reckoned last, which accounts for

4 Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

5 And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were [b] seventy

[b] Gen. 46. 26, 27.—ver. 20. Deut. 10. 22.

Benjamin's occupying the seventh place instead of the eleventh. The frequent mention of the names of the twelve patriarchs in the sacred history lays a foundation for the numerous allusions in the sacred writings to this as a mystical number applied to the church of the New Testament. Thus in Rev. 7. 5—8, mention is made of the *twelve* tribes of Israel, and of *twelve* thousand sealed out of every tribe; ch. 12. 1, of the *twelve* stars upon the woman's crown; ch. 21. 12—14, of the *twelve* gates, and *twelve* foundations of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem; where it may be observed that the jasper foundation, the precious stone in the breast-plate in which Benjamin's name was written, Ex. 28. 20, is the first in order. Moses also in Deut. 33. 12, assigns Benjamin his blessing before his elder brother Joseph.

5. *All the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob.* Heb. כל נפש יצאי ירך יעקב *kol nephesh yotzeë yerek Yaakob, all the soul* (collect. sing.) *of the proceeders-out-of the thigh of Jacob;* the usual idiom for expressing physical generation.——¶ *Seventy souls.* That is, persons. See Note on Gen. 14. 21. By comparing this passage with Gen. 46. 27, it appears that the whole number, exclusive of Jacob himself, amounted to 66; including him to 67; so that Joseph with his two sons are necessary to make up the complement. If it be objected that this mode of enumeration represents Jacob as coming out of his own thigh, we refer in reply to the Note on a similar phraseology, Gen. 35. 22, 26. The Sept. version, which transfers the final clause of this verse to the beginning of it, states the number at 75, which is followed by Stephen, Acts

souls: for Joseph was in Egypt *already.*

6 And [c] Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

[c] Gen. 50. 26. Acts. 7. 15.

7. 14. For an explanation of this apparent discrepancy, see Note on Gen. 46. 27.——¶ *For Joseph was in Egypt already;* and therefore is to be excepted from the number that came into Egypt, though not from the number of Jacob's descendants. Chal. 'With Joseph, who was in Egypt.'

6. *And Joseph died,* &c. After attaining to the age of 110 years, during 80 of which he was a ruler in Egypt. Of his sepulture nothing is here said; but we learn elsewhere that his remains, as well as those of his brethren, were carried out of Egypt and buried in Sychem in the land of Canaan. Exod. 13. 19. Acts, 7. 16.——¶ *All that generation.* Not only the whole generation of Joseph's kindred, but all the men of that age, Egyptians as well as Israelites. Compare Gen. 6. 9. Generations are mortal as well as individuals, nor can the nearest relations keep each other alive. The term of their existence, as well as the bounds of their habitation, is set by God himself. A very considerable lapse of time however is implied in this expression, as Levi lived to the age of 137, and consequently survived Joseph by 27 years. The passage forms a natural introduction to the ensuing history of the great change that occurred in the condition of the Israelites under the next reign. During the long period of the sojourning of Joseph and his brethren in Egypt nothing transpired to mar the peace and prosperity which they there enjoyed, or to prevent the men of that generation passing off the stage in silent succession, till a new race had imperceptibly sprung up to occupy their places. Eccl. 1. 4, 'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh.'

7 ¶ [d] And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there [e] arose up a new

[d] Gen. 46. 3. Deut. 26. 5. Ps. 105. 24. Acts 7. 17.

[e] Acts 7. 18.

7. *Were fruitful.* Heb. פרה *paru*, a term often applied to the vigorous fructification of trees and plants, and implying here that none of the Israelitish women were barren; they began early and continued long in bearing, and not unfrequently perhaps brought forth more than one at a birth. Gr. ηυξηθησαν, *were augmented.*——¶ *Increased abundantly.* Heb. ישרצו *yishretzu, bred swiftly, like fishes*, or reptiles. See Note on Gen. 1. 20. Gr. επληθυνθησαν, *were multiplied.* Vulg. 'Quasi germinantes multiplicati sunt,' *as it were springing up were multiplied.*——¶ *Multiplied.* Heb. רבו *yirbu, became numerous.* Gr. ηυξηθησαν εγενοντο, *became diffusely abundant.*——¶ *Waxed exceeding mighty.* Heb. יעצמו *yaatzmu, became strong.* Gr. κατισχυον, *prevailed.* The accumulation of these nearly synonimous terms gives the utmost intensity to the writer's meaning, and conveys the idea of amazing and unparalleled increase. This is elsewhere abundantly confirmed. It was 430 years from the call of Abraham to the deliverance from Egypt, during the first 215 of which the promised seed increased to but 70 souls, but during the latter half of the same period these 70 were multiplied, Num. 1. 46, to 600,000 fighting men; and if to these we add the women, the children, and the aged, the whole number probably amounted to upwards of two millions! Well then does the psalmist say, Ps. 105. 24, that 'he increased his people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies.' See also Deut. 26. 5.

8. *There arose up a new king over Egypt.* Gr. ανεστη βασιλευς ετερος, *there arose up another king.* This rendering is somewhat remarkable, as the literal translation of חדש is not ετερος, *another*, but καινος, *new.* It probably implies a king of *another* race, of a different dynasty, one who came to the throne, not by regular succession, but in consequence of intestine revolution or foreign conquest. This interpretation seems to be warranted by the analogous usage of the word 'new' in the following and numerous other passages; Deut. 32. 17, 'They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to *new* gods that came newly up;' i. e. to strange gods, to exotic deities. Judg. 5. 8, 'They chose *new* gods;' i. e. other or strange gods, the gods of the heathen. So Mark, 16. 17, 'They shall speak with *new* tongues;' i. e. with foreign tongues, the languages of other people. The informations of profane history on this point are exceedingly vague and meagre, but it is contended by some writers, that it was about this time that Egypt was invaded and occupied by a powerful Asiatic people, whose rulers formed the dynasty of *shepherd-kings*, of whom so much is said in Manetho, Herodotus, and others. Josephus also (Ant. L. II. c. 9. § 1.) expressly affirms that the Israelites were oppressed by the Egyptians after the death of Joseph, '*the government having been transferred to another family.*' But even were this point involved in far less obscurity than it is, it would comport but little with our plan to enter into its discussion. Matters of mere historical interest, of which the Scriptures say nothing, come rather within the province of the antiquarian than of the commentator.——¶ *Which knew not Joseph.* That is, who regarded not, who appreciated not. A like phraseology occurs Judg. 2. 10, 'And there arose another generation which *knew not* the Lord, neither the

king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, [f]the people of the children

[f] Ps. 105. 24.

works which he had done for Israel.' That is, which did not *gratefully acknowledge* the Lord, or his various works of mercy towards them. The memory of the name and services of so eminent a benefactor could not but have been preserved among the nation, and must, as a matter of report, have come to the ears of the king, but it is a peculiarity of words of *knowledge*, in the Hebrew, that they imply also the exercise of the *affections*. Thus, Ps. 1. 6, 'The Lord *knoweth* the way of the righteous,' i. e. loveth. Ps. 31. 7, 'Thou hast *known* my soul in adversities;' i. e. thou hast tenderly regarded. Prov. 24. 23, 'It is not good to *have respect* of persons in judgment.' Heb. 'to *know* persons.' Job. 34. 19, 'How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor *regardeth* the rich more than the poor.' Heb. 'nor *knoweth the* rich.' It was probably in this sense that the new king is said not to have *known* Joseph, and this is less to be wondered at if, as suggested above, he was of a foreign nation and another dynasty. The Chal. renders it, 'Who confirmed not the decree of Joseph,' i. e. according to Fagius, either that he totally disregarded all the ordinances and enactments which Joseph had originated, and introduced universal innovation; or that he utterly broke through all the compacts and covenants existing between Joseph as the representative of Israel, and the Pharaoh who then filled the throne, and began cruelly to oppress a people whom his predecessor had sworn to protect and befriend. Both the Targum of Jonathan and that of Jerusalem adhere to the former sense; 'Who considered not Joseph, nor walked in his statutes.' The comment of Rabbi Solomon probably brings us still nearer to the true sense, 'Who acted as if he did not know him.' It is doubtless to be set down to the account of an exemplary modesty in Joseph that no more effectual means had been adopted to secure among the Egyptians the abiding memory and acknowledgment of his great services to that people. Had he been of an aspiring spirit, covetous of present or posthumous fame, had he sought great things for himself or his kindred, we cannot question that monuments and various other memorials would have transmitted his name to posterity as an illustrious benefactor of his adopted country. But the prompting of this nature appears to have swayed the bosom of Joseph. All his hopes were fixed upon the possession of the promised inheritance, he seems to have accounted it sufficient simply to enjoy, for the time being, the hospitality of a foreign prince, till the destined period of removal should arrive, without multiplying the ties which would then have to be broken. But just in proportion as *he* was little anxious and aspiring on this score, was the ingratitude and forgetfulness of the Egyptians the more culpable. It is on the basest spirit of the world that will take occasion, from the lowliness of the claims of an eminent public servant, to bury in speedy oblivion the remembrance of his services. Yet his was but the lot of thousands, whose noble benefactions to their fellow men have been repaid with the most ungrateful neglect. The poor man by his wisdom delivereth the city, yet no man remembereth that same poor man. Could we find a national conscience, we might look for national gratitude.

9. *He said unto his people.* To his people in the persons of their representatives, his counsellors.——¶ *Behold, the people of the children of Israel.* He

ot Israel *are* more and mightier than we.

10 g Come on, let us h deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and

g Ps. 10. 2. & 83. 3, 4. h Job. 5. 13. Ps. 105. 25. Prov. 16. 25. & 21. 30. Acts. 7. 19.

it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and *so* get them up out of the land.

am benē Yisrael. This is rendered in most of the ancient versions as in ours; but Aben Ezra remarks, with undoubted correctness, that עם *people* is not here in the construct state, but in apposition with בני *children*, so as to require the rendering, 'the people, the children of Israel.' A distinctive and not conjunctive accent is placed upon *people*.——¶ *More and mightier*. Heb. רב ועצום *rab ve-atzum*, *many and mighty* beyond us. They had become mightier by becoming more; that is, not perhaps absolutely more; not so as to outnumber the population of all Egypt; but more in proportion to the space occupied; more within any given limits. 'He speaks,' says Trapp, as if he had looked through a multiplying glass;' and it is scarcely extravagant to say, that such a multiplying glass was in fact the promise given to Abraham. By others, the words have been regarded as a false pretext for reducing the Israelites to bondage. But this we think less probable.

10. *Let us deal wisely with them*. Heb. נתחכמה לו *nithhakkemah lo*, *let us deal wisely against him* (collect. sing. for plur.); i. e. cunningly, craftily; let us devise some method of oppressing them, of preventing their enormous increase, and at the same time avoid the show of oppression and downright tyranny, and the danger arising from their great physical force. Gr. κατασοφισωμεθα, *let us outwit them*. Vulg. sapienter opprimamus eum, *let us wisely oppress him (them)*. Chal. 'Let us deal wisely against them.' The original term חכם *hakam*, is used for the most part in a good sense for *acting wisely*, *skilfully*, *prudently*, yet it occasionally carries with it the import of *cunning*, *subtlety*, *wiliness*, and in Ps. 105. 20, in reference to this very event, we find the equivalent term התנכל *hithnakkel*, from נכל *to contrive deceitfully or insidiously*, 'He turned their hearts to hate his people, to *deal subtilely* with his servants.' The *wisdom* here proposed to be employed was the wisdom of the serpent; but with men of reprobate minds, governed solely by the corrupt spirit of this world, whatever measures tend to promote their own interests and circumvent their opponents, is dignified by the epithet *wise*, though it be found when judged by a purer standard, to be in reality nothing less than the very *policy of hell*. So easily is language perverted, and made a sanction for the most iniquitous proceedings.——¶ *Lest they multiply*, &c. That is, lest they *continue* to multiply, and become more and mightier still. It is obvious, however, that the mere multiplication of the Israelites was no just ground of alarm, so long as they were well used and no provocation given them to turn against the people with whom they dwelt. They were a peaceful race of shepherds, who looked upon themselves as mere temporary sojourners in Egypt, and who would therefore be the last to engage in plots and insurrections against the government. The promises given them by God, and the hopes which they entertained as a nation, were the strongest security which the Egyptians could have that nothing was to be apprehended from them on the score of rebellion. Indeed, a nation so evidently favored of Heaven, instead of being regarded as a source of danger, could not but prove a bulwark of defence to the country, if treated as friends. But the wicked fear where no fear is, and when intent upon

11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters, [i] to afflict them with their [k] burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom, [l] and Raamses.

[i] Gen. 15. 13. ch. 3. 7. Deut. 26. 6.

[k] ch. 2. 11. & 5. 4, 5. Ps. 81. 6. [l] Gen. 47. 11.

oppression or wrong they will feign occasions for it, and pretend the existence in others of the same evil purposes which they cherish themselves. Looking through the flimsy veil with which their real motives were covered, we see plainly that hatred of their religion, envy at their prosperity, and a covetous desire of possessing their riches, prompted the oppressors of Israel to these nefarious counsels. But it should not be forgotten on the other hand, that the *truly wise* counsels of God in reference to his own people lay deeper than those of their enemies. It is clear from various intimations in the sacred writers, as Josh. 24. 14. Ezek. 20. 5—8, and 23. 8, that the chosen people were beginning to lapse into the idolatry of Egypt, which justly subjected them to the hardships which they were now made to endure; and the train of events was now also to be laid which was to result in their deliverance from the house of bondage. Their covenant God had a rich blessing in store for them, but he determines, by the antecedent bitterness of their lot, to enhance its sweetness when it came.——¶ *When there falleth out any war.* Heb. תקראנה מלחמה *tikrenah milhamah*. The original here presents a grammatical anomaly in point of concord, the verb 'falleth out,' being in the plural, while the substantive, 'war,' is in the singular. Such instances occur where it is the object of the writer to give at once a collective and distributive sense to the term employed. This import of the phrase our translators have endeavored to intimate by introducing, very properly, the epithet 'any,' which does not occur in the Hebrew. A usage precisely similar is met with in the following passages; Ps. 119. 103, 'How *sweet are thy words* unto my taste;' i. e. all and singular of thy words. Prov. 28. 1, 'The *wicked flee* when no man pursueth;' i. e. the wicked, one and all, flee. So also 1 Tim. 2. 15, 'Notwithstanding *she* shall be saved in child-bearing, if *they* continue in faith, and charity, and holiness.'

11. *Set over them task-masters,* i. e. tax-gatherers. Heb. וישׂם עליו שרי מסים *va-yasimu alaw sarē missim, and they placed over him* (collect. sing.) *masters of burdens.* The original is frequently used to denote *tribute*, both here, and occasionally elsewhere, but doubtless has the sense of *tasks, burdens, onerous services*, such as were probably imposed upon those who could not or would not pay the appointed tribute. The term therefore which primarily signified *tribute* was employed to denote its substitute or equivalent *service.* Gr. εργων επιστατας, *masters of works.* Chal. 'Princes or prefects exentreating (them).' Syr. 'Worse than rulers.' Targ. Jon. 'Prefects who made them to serve.'——¶ *To afflict them with their burdens.* Heb. בסבלתם *annotho be-siblotham, to humble* (collect. sing.) *with their burdens*; i. e. with the burdens of their imposing. The suffix 'their' having reference to the Egyptians and not the Israelites. It is worthy of notice that the term employed, *anah, afflict*, here used is the very term in which God had predicted to Abraham, hundreds of years before the events of his seed; Gen. 15. 13, 'And they shall *afflict* (וענו *ve-innu*) them four hundred years.' Their purpose evidently was by their severe exactions of tribute and labor not only to afflict and impoverish them, but utterly to break down their spirits, to destroy their energy, and thus eventually to check the prodigious increase. With this view

were suddenly reduced to a state of vassalage; they were declared to be the absolute property of the crown; and the whole of the male population being told off into companies, was employed night and day under their task-masters, upon public works, and driven like cattle into the fields. They were compelled to dig clay, to make bricks, to bear burdens, and to build cities, whilst at the same time no doubt the greatest cruelties were exercised towards them. Of this period of the Jewish history, Josephus thus speaks: 'And having, in length of time, forgotten the benefits they had received from Joseph, particularly the crown being now come into another family, they became very abusive to the Israelites, and contrived many ways of afflicting them; for they enjoined them to cut a great number of channels for the river, and to build walls for their cities, and ramparts that they might restrain the river, and hinder its waters from stagnating, upon its running over its own banks. They set them also to build pyramids; and by all this tore them out, and forced them to learn all sorts of mechanical arts, and to accustom themselves to hard labor.' All this was done under the expectation that multitudes of them would perish from their exertion, whilst all would become so enfeebled as that the progress of population would be effectually checked. But as usual where men set themselves to counteract the fixed purposes of God, the result proved directly contrary to their anticipations. When the language of his decree is, 'Increase and multiply,' it is equally idle and impious for the edict of puny mortals to proclaim, 'Abstain and be diminished.'——

And they built treasure cities. Heb. וירבן ערי מסכנות, *va-yiben arĕ miskenoth, and he built* (collect. sing.) *cities of store*, as the phrase is rendered 2 Chron. 16. 4, 'And they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the *store-cities* (מסכנות *miskenoth*) of Naphtali;' and 17. 12, 'And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and *cities of store* (מסכנות *miskenoth*).' Different versions, however, present different renderings, among which are *store-houses, granaries, fortresses*, and *walled towns*. The Chal. has 'Cities of the house of treasure;' i. e. cities in which treasures are deposited; but what kind of treasures we are not informed. Probably they were cities that served not so much for places where the king laid up his riches, as for depots and granaries for corn. Syr. and Arab. 'Store-houses for corn.' This is confirmed by 2 Chron. 32. 28, from which we learn that Hezekiah caused the erection of '*store-houses* (מסכנות *miskenoth*) for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil.' The Gr. renders it by πολεις οχυρας, *fortified cities*, not because this is the primary meaning of the original words, but because it was proper and customary that cities which were to be made repositories for the safe keeping of any articles whatever should be enclosed by walls and strongly fortified. Large armies were no doubt subsisted even in times of peace by the kings of Egypt, which would make such depots necessary; and perhaps the very force required to carry into execution the measures against the Israelites would lead to the erection of these places as public stores. The Vulg. has 'urbes tabernaculorum,' *cities of tabernacles*, undoubtedly from mistaking the original for משכנות *mishkenoth*, which signifies *tabernacles*.——

¶ *Pithom and Raamses.* The Jerus. Targ. makes these places to be *Tanis* and *Pelusium*; but nothing certain can be determined respecting their site. As the land of Goshen, however, is called 'the land of Rameses,' Gen. 47. 11, there is reason to believe that the latter town was in that land, to which it gave or from which it received its name. See Professor Stuart's Course of Hebrew Study, Vol. II., Excursus II., which con-

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve wit rigour.

14 And they [m]made their liv

[m] ch. 2. 23. & 6. 9. Numb. 20. 15. Ac 7. 19, 34.

tains a very able and interesting view of the topography of Goshen.

12. *The more they afflicted them*, &c. Heb. כאשר יענו אתו *ka-asher ye-annu otho, according as they afflicted him* (collect. sing.), *so he multiplied and so he brake forth* (into a multitude). The latter verb יפרץ *yiphrotz* is the same as that which occurs Gen. 28. 14, to denote a rapid and, as it were, a *bursting* increase and diffusion; 'Thou shalt *spread abroad* (תפרץ *tiphrotz*) to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south.' The historian's words depict to us the conflict between the favor of God and the cruelty of the Egyptian king. The more his people suffered from the tyranny of their masters, the more prolific the women proved to be, thus showing, that 'there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.' Some commentators have been disposed to resort to natural causes to account for this amazing increase, but we are satisfied with the solution offered by the words of the promise, Gen. 15. 5, 'Look now toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them—so shall thy seed be.'——¶ *They were grieved because of the children of Israel.* Heb. יקצו *yakutzu.* The leading idea is doubtless that of mingled *chagrin* and *abhorrence.* Finding that, in spite of all their efforts, the people continued to increase, they were filled with inward vexation, and there was something *irksome* in the very thought of the hated race of Israel. Chal. 'There was tribulation (vexation) to the Egyptians by reason of the children of Israel.' Gr. εβδελυσσοντο, *they were abominated*, just as one is said to be 'scandalized' by that which is a cause of offence; they regarded the Israelites as an abomin tion. The import of the original wo may be gathered from its use in the f lowing connexions. Gen. 27. 46, 'I a *weary* (קצתי) of my life, because the daughters of Heth.' Num. 21. 'Our soul *loatheth* (קצה) this lig bread.' Lev. 20. 23, 'They committ all these things, and therefore I *abh red* (אקץ) them.' A passage still m to the point occurs Num. 22. 3, where like cause of vexation is hinted a 'And Moab was sore afraid of the pe ple, because they were many; and Mo *was distressed* (ויקץ) because of t children of Israel;' where Ainswo renders, as in Gen. 27. 46, 'was irked

13. *With rigor.* Heb. בפרך *bephar with fierceness.* Gr. βια, *with for* Chal. 'With hardness.' From the or inal פרך *pherek* comes the Latin *fe* and the English *fierce.* The Israeli were subsequently prohibited from ing in this manner over their brethr Lev. 25. 46, 'But over your brethr the children of Israel, ye shall not one over another *with rigor* (בפרך *pherek*);' i. e. without mercy. So were the pretended fears of the Eg ians from working within them least sentiment of clemency, that t were evidently goaded on by the f trâtion of their hopes, to a still m relentless course of oppression. Wic men are slow to be taught, when t mad schemes are defeated, that fights against them; and even if a thought now and then glances their minds, they seem to be stung exasperated by it, to rush on yet recklessly in the way of rebellion. is strikingly evident from the sequ the present narrative.

14. *Made their lives bitter*, &c.

πικρωδυνων αυτων την ζωην, *made sorrowful their life*. 'Of a bad man it is said, in the East, 'He makes the lives of his servants bitter.' Also, 'Ah! the fellow: the heart of his wife is made bitter.' 'My soul is bitter.' 'My heart is like the bitter tree.'—*Roberts*. The intensity of their hardships could not well be better expressed, for as nothing is sweeter than life, it is only the extremest misery that can render existence itself grievous and burdensome.

——¶ *In mortar*. Heb. בחמר *behomer*; more properly 'in clay' of which bricks are made. This is considered by some as subversive of the statement of Josephus, that the pyramids were built by the Israelites, as it is well known that they are constructed of *stone*, instead of *brick*. But all the pyramids are not of stone, as in the province of Fayoum, the ancient Arsinoe, as also at Dashour and Saccara, pyramids of sun-dried brick are still found in a remarkable degree of preservation. Yet even if they were all of them stone structures, it is not a legitimate conclusion that because the Hebrews worked in brick, they therefore did not work in stone also. After all, however, the agency of the Israelites in rearing the pyramids is a point on which nothing positive can be asserted, although it is no doubt safe to affirm that, *if* the pyramids were built during the bondage of the Israelites, they were engaged upon them, and indeed upon all the public works which were then undertaken. Prisoners and slaves would seem to have been generally employed in such labors; for it was the proud boast of some of the princes of that country, that no Egyptian had labored in the greatest of their works. 'What masses were employed, and how profusely human life was wasted, is evinced by the statement in a previous note, that Necho worked away 100,000 lives in the attempt to cut a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea. Things are much the same now in the same country. Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt, obliged 150,000 men, chiefly Arabs from Upper Egypt, to work on his canal connecting the Nile with the sea at Alexandria: 20,000 of the number perished during the progress of the work. A new canal was in progress when Carne was at Alexandria. That writer says: 'The bed of the canal presented a novel spectacle, being filled with a vast number of Arabs of various colors, toiling in the intense heat of the day, while their Egyptian (?) task-masters, with whips in their hands, watched the progress of their labor. It was a just and lively representation of the children of Israel forced to toil by their oppressive masters of old. The wages Mahmoud allowed to these unfortunate people, whom he had obliged to quit their homes and families in Upper Egypt, were only a penny a day and a ration of bread.' ('Letters from the East,' p. 71, 72.) Thus were the lives of the Israelites 'made bitter with hard bondage.'—*Pict. Bib.*

——¶ *In all manner of hard service in the field*. That is, in all kinds of agricultural labor. We may here remark, that although the condition of the Hebrews in Egypt at this time was one of bondage, yet it does not appear to have been that of *house-slaves* or *personal servants*. It was rather a servitude which consisted in being subject to very grievous and excessive exactions imposed by public authority. They were slaves to the *state* rather than to individuals. In this respect their bondage differed very considerably from that which is unhappily common in our own country. It resembled more the condition of the *serfs* or *vassals* of feudal times, who held their lands at the pleasure of their lords, and who were subject to any exactions of rent or labor at the will of the baron. It appears clear from Ex. 12. 38, that the Hebrews as a body had continued to hold property of their own, though heavy bur-

bitter with hard bondage, [n] in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their

[n] Ps. 81. 6.

service wherein they made them serve *was* with rigour.

15 ¶ And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives (of which

dens had been laid upon them; and the accounts given elsewhere of the offerings and presents made to the tabernacle, &c., make it evident that the nation as such had not been reduced to precisely *that kind of slavery* with which we are familiar in modern times. They had only been subject to severe and oppressive demands of service, in behalf of the king of Egypt and his officers. Still it was a state of cruel suffering to which an innocent people, against the faith of covenants, were condemned, and such as could not but in the end draw down the judgments of Heaven. But let us not forget the wise and ultimately beneficent purposes which these afflictions were designed to subserve. To the suffering Israelites they were at once *penal* and *disciplinary*. One great end to be attained by them was, that they might be inspired with so deep an abhorrence of the land of their oppressions, that the prospect of returning to Canaan should become more and more refreshing to their hearts, and that when once embarked in the journey thither, they might, remembering the wormwood and the gall, feel no desire to retrace their steps, and fix themselves again in the house of bondage. And as the ensuing narrative acquaints us with the fact, that notwithstanding all their previous calamities, many of them, during the sojourn in the wilderness, did actually project a return to Egypt, we can easily conjecture what would have been the case had they lived in ease, in fulness, and in pleasure, in the place of their sojourn.

15. *The king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives.* Finding himself baffled in his first scheme of open and atrocious wrong, he now resorts to a secret stratagem of a more bloody character to compass his ends. This requires to be somewhat more particularly considered. The original word for 'midwives' (מיַלְדוֹת *meyalledoth*) is not a substantive, but a participle, signifying *those who cause to bring forth* and the words, according to several of the ancient versions, and some modern critics, may be rendered, 'And the king spake to those who made or aided the Hebrew women to bring forth;' this understanding from the original 'midwives of the Hebrew women,' instead of 'Hebrew midwives.' The construction certainly renders it in a degree doubtful whether they were Egyptian or Hebrew women. On the one hand it is difficult to suppose that the king should have entrusted such an order to Hebrew women. Could he have supposed that they would conspire with him in an attempt to extinguish their own race? And when they excused themselves by the plea mentioned v. 19, could he have relied implicitly on the word, without suspecting fraud, if they been Israelitish women? Yet he seems to have admitted the truth of their statement without the slightest hesitation. This was natural, provided the women were Egyptians, but less so if they were not. It is indeed said, v. 17, that these women 'feared God,' and consequently refused to obey the royal mandate; from which it is inferred that they must have been Hebrew women. But the original 'Elohim' is here preceded by the article, and may, it is said, be rendered 'the gods,' i. e. the powers above; implying merely such a belief in a divine being and a superintending providence, as was perhaps general and prevalent in this early age of the world. But then, on the other hand, (1.) the more obvious import of the text leads us to understand Hebrew women;

he name of one *was* Shiphrah, and he name of the other Puah;)
16 And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see *them* upon the stools; if it *be* a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it *be* a daughter, then she shall live.

neant, whether we regard the construction of the original, or of the translation. Doubtless there *were* Hebrew women capable of employing themselves in this service in behalf of their kindred, and if Egyptian women had been procured, it would have excited suspicion at once, and perhaps prevented their access to them. (2) It cannot be denied that the character given of them, v. 17, as 'fearers of God,' applies more naturally to Hebrew women, who had been instructed in the religion of their fathers. The phrase, we think, is indicative of *general character*, and not of any sudden dread with which they may have been smitten on this occasion. Living habitually under the influence of salutary fear of God, they could not be persuaded for a moment to entertain the thought of such horrid cruelty, though they may have been restrained, from motives of policy, from expressly refusing to the king at the time that they would have no hand in the perpetration of such a deed. (3) Their names are purely Hebraic and not Egyptian. (4) To the improbability of Pharaoh's selecting Hebrew women to be the instruments of such a cruel scheme against their own flesh and blood, it may be replied that the same reason held against his appointing Hebrew officers over their own countrymen, which yet we find he actually did, Ex. 5. 14. On the whole, therefore, we cannot but conclude that the midwives were Hebrew and not Egyptian women, notwithstanding that Josephus affirms the contrary.——¶ *The name of the one was Shiphrah*, &c. Two individuals only are mentioned, but as the number would be wholly inadequate to the service of so many thousand Israelites, it is with great reason supposed, that Shiphrah and Puah were the chief persons of the profession, having the direction of the rest. We learn from Plutarch, that some of the nations of antiquity had schools established among them where females were taught the obstetrical art. This was perhaps the office of these two individuals.

16. *See them upon the stools.* Heb. על האבנים *al ha-obnayim*, *upon the stones.* Commentators have been much divided in opinion as to the nature and use of the objects intended by the term here translated *stools*, but which is literally *stones.* It would seem perhaps at first view, that they were some contrivance for procuring a more easy delivery for women in labor. But besides that, stone-seats were obviously very unfit for such a purpose, the Heb. word in Ex. 7. 19, signifies *a vessel of stone for holding water, a trough.* A far more probable interpretation, therefore, is made out by referring the pronoun 'them,' which it will be observed is not in the original, not to the *mothers*, but to the *children*; 'When ye see the new-born children laid in the troughs or vessels of stone, for the purpose of being washed, ye shall destroy the boys.' A passage from the travels of Thevenot seems to confirm this construction: 'The kings of Persia are so afraid of being deprived of that power which they abuse, and are so apprehensive of being dethroned, that they destroy the children of their female relations, when they are brought to bed of boys, *by putting them into an earthen trough*, where they suffer them to starve;' that is, probably, under pretence of preparing to wash them, they let them pine away or destroy them in the water. This view of the meaning represents the midwives above spoken of, as acting in the capacity of *superintendents*, for *they* are not

17 But the midwives [o] feared God, and did not [p] as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive.

18 And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive?

[o] Prov. 16. 6. [p] Dan. 3. 16, 18. & 6. 13. Acts 5. 29.

19 And [q] the midwives said Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew men *are* not as the Egyptian men; for they *are* lively, and delivered ere the midwives in unto them.

20 [r] Therefore God dealt well the midwives; and the people tiplied, and waxed very migh

[q] See Josh. 2. 4, &c. 2 Sam. 17. 19, 20. 11. 18. Eccles. 8. 12. Isai. 3. 10. Hebr

supposed to place the children on the 'stools,' but to examine them after they are placed there by others. It is evident that if they actually assisted at the birth, the sex of the infant would be known without the necessity of inspecting its person during its ablutions at the trough.——¶ *If it be a son*, &c. The reason of the order is obvious; the state had nothing to apprehend on the score of insurrection from the weaker sex, and as they were fairer than the daughters of Egypt, they would naturally be preserved, with a view to their finally becoming inmates of the harems of their lords.

17. *The midwives feared God*, &c. Their faith shines conspicuous in this, for they must have been aware that it was dangerous to incur the king's wrath by disobeying his orders. Tyrants are not wont to suffer their decrees to be disregarded with impunity, and it was no doubt at the peril of their lives that they gave way to the dictates of piety towards God rather than comply with the injunction of the king.

19. *Because the Hebrew women are lively*, &c. Heb. חיות *ha-yoth*; i. e. quick and strong in bearing; being possessed of greater natural vigor and robustness of constitution. It is well known that women inured to hard labor have but little pain in child-bearing, compared with those who are accustomed to an easier mode of life. It is worthy of note also that the original here is the term usually applied to *wild beasts* (see Note on Gen. 1. 24),

and the latent implication may be they brought forth somewhat aft manner of the beasts of the without requiring any obstetrica This assertion of the midwive doubtless true in itself, althoug the whole truth; but the withhol part of the truth from those wh take advantage of the whole t or destroy the innocent, is not onl ful but laudable.

20. *God dealt well with the mid* We may doubtless fairly infer fro that, in some way not expressly r ed, they were favored with spec kens of the divine approbation conduct they had evinced. At the time, the fact of granting to the ites such a continued extraordinar tiplication was in itself a 'dealin with the midwives. They were no many of them mothers themselv they could not but rejoice in th servation and the increase of thei lies, nor could the general favo bestowed upon the nation fail to r to them. Indeed, we are strong clined to consider the final clause verse as perfectly synonimous w expression 'made them houses,' next. The connexion between t will be obvious from the remar immediately follow. In the mea let us not fail to observe, that right and exemplary conduct, by soever displayed, may be of th eminent service to a whole com Even a few feeble but right-h women may, without their drea

21 And it came to pass, because
e midwives feared God, [s]that he
ade them houses.

[s] See 1 Sam. 2. 35. 2 Sam. 7. 11, 13, 27, 29 Kings 2. 24. & 11. 38. Ps. 127. 1.

22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, [t]Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

[t] Acts 7. 19.

e effects of their deportment, be si-
ntly working out the welfare of the
ate to which they belong.

21. *And it came to pass, because*, &c. he original will easily admit a slight riation in the rendering of this para-aph, which, if we mistake not, will row light upon the whole context; And it came to pass, because the mid-ves feared God, and (because) he ade them houses (i. e. increased the geny of the children of Israel), *that* araoh charged all his people saying,' It is important for the English der to be informed that the original them' is in the *masculine* and not he *feminine* gender; so that, with-a violent grammatical anomaly, it ot so properly or primarily be refer-o the midwives, as to the families of el at large. If the expression, more-, refers strictly to the midwives, it ld have been more natural to insert the preceding verse, as explanatory he manner in which God 'dealt well' h them; 'Therefore God dealt well the midwives, *and made them ses*.' But this is not the construc-. There is nothing to illustrate his aling well' with them but his mul-ying the nation, and as this is the oubted import of the phrase 'made n houses,' we cannot but consider two clauses as essentially synoni-us. At the same time, there is perhaps ood reason to doubt that the *houses* or *milies* of the midwives were intended be especially, but not exclusively, rred to. *Their* houses shared in a al manner in the general prosperity. may now, having endeavored to the connexion of the context, con-r with more precision the import of phrase 'made them houses.' We have in the Note on Gen. 16. 2, detailed at length the ideal connexion between *building* and *the begetting of children*. In the scriptural idiom a *house* is a *family*, as the 'house of Judah,' 'the house of Benjamin,' the house of David,' &c., and *to build or make one a house* is to confer upon him a numerous posterity. To the examples there adduced, the following may be added, 2 Sam. 7. 11, 'The Lord telleth thee that he will *make thee an house* (בית יעשה לך); i. e. will give thee a long line of descendants. 1 Kings, 2. 24, 'Now, therefore, as the Lord liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has *made me an house* (עשה לי בית), as he promised, &c.,' i. e. given me a prosperous family. The phraseology might be still farther confirmed, but the above will be sufficient to show that the 'blessing' intended was that of a *numerous increase*, and not of a *material habitation*, or any thing of that nature, as some have supposed.

22. *Charged all his people, saying*, &c., leaving it no more to the care of the midwives alone. Frustrated in his former device, the king is now urged on to a higher pitch of enormity, and discarding all secret stratagems for effecting his object, commands *all* his people indiscriminately to destroy the Hebrew male children wherever they should find them. The execution of this bloody command would no doubt lead to scenes of barbarity and cruelty at which every tender feeling of our nature revolts with an inward shudder. Helpless babes would be mercilessly torn from their mothers' arms, and if they did not follow their dear offspring, as they were ruthlessly thrown into the Nile, it was

only because their religious sentiments were stronger than their maternal instincts. But we read, in a subsequent part of the history, a fearful requital of this sanguinary transaction, when Pharaoh and his Egyptian host were overwhelmed in the waters of the Red Sea. 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus.'

REMARKS.—(1, 2.) In the history of the church, it is the special aim of the Spirit to present its humble beginnings in strong contrast with the abundant increase and ample prosperity of its more advanced periods.

(7.) The land of enemies, and the scene of the most grinding oppression, is easily rendered in the providence of God a nursery for the increase of his church.

(8.) Peculiar blessings from God, and fierce opposition from worldly powers, are not unfrequently connected in the lot of the church on earth.

(8.) The people of God would have experienced less ill treatment at the hands of civil governments, were the national benefits which they are instrumental in procuring better appreciated and remembered.

(8, 9.) The prosperity of the righteous is doubtless an eye-sore to evil-minded oppressors; but those who task their invention to devise methods of affliction are dealing wisely to compass their own destruction. Eccl. 7. 16, 'Make not thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?'

(10.) Much of the *real* suffering of the saints in all ages has been inflicted on the ground of *hypothetical* offences. 'Lest when there falleth out,' &c.

(11.) Counsels of wickedness ripen rapidly into acts and practices of cruelty.

(13, 14.) The favor of God toward his children in affliction, is often the signal for their oppressors to load them with new burdens of anguish.

(15.) How fiendish is the policy which would employ the tender and susceptible nature of woman in executing deeds of blood!

(17.) The true fear of God will d the weakest creatures who are cap of cherishing it, from the commis of sin, and when the command of is put in competition with the comm of God, they will boldly say with intrepid disciples, Acts, 4. 19, 'Whe it be right in the sight of God to hea unto you more than unto God, judge

(20.) Even in this world a sup regard to the will of God seldom unrewarded. This reward is somet entailed as a precious legacy to ge tions yet unborn.

(22.) Relentless persecutors pro from secret subtilty to open cruelty downright murder is the resource other stratagems have failed of e ing their object.

CHAPTER II.

To what extent the murderous mentioned at the close of the fore chapter was carried, or how long it tinued in force, we are not infor But when we consider that the lo offspring was an absorbing passion the Israelites, inasmuch as all future hopes depended upon and connected with the possession of merous issue, we can easily con the horror that must have hung that ill-fated people so long a bloody statute remained unrep Yet now, at this very time, whe in their weak counsels proposed u to root up the vine of Israel, whic already spread its branches so w and borne such abundant fruit, it p God to call into existence the Deliverer, and to make the very e which his infancy was expose means of his preparation for tha office, which was, in a distant d devolve upon him. This rema event in the history of oppressed it is the object of the present cha relate.

CHAPTER II.

AND there went [a] a man of the house of Levi, and took *to wife* daughter of Levi.

[a] ch. 6. 20. Numb. 26. 59. 1 Chron. 23. 14.

2 And the woman conceived and bare a son: and [b] when she saw him that he *was a* goodly *child*, she hid him three months.

[b] Acts 7. 20. Hebr. 11. 23.

1. *And there went a man*, &c., Heb. וילך *va-yelek*. According to Calvin, *ere had gone*; implying that the marage had taken place some time previ- is to the royal order for the drowning the male-children. Certain it is that aron was three years old at the birth Moses, and we have no intimation at *his* infancy was in any way exosed to peril. As such an order would aturally be executed with most severity mediately upon its being issued, and Aaron's infancy was unmolested, it ms a fair presumption that the edict e forth not far from the birth-time Moses; so that the pluperfect rend- g of the verb may perhaps be con- red of the most correct. The verb go,' by a peculiarity of idiom in the inal, is frequently employed in a se including not the idea of locomo-, but simply that of *commencing, or ying upon, an action or enterprise*; Gen. 35. 22, 'And it came to pass, Israel dwelt in that land, that ben *went* and lay with Bilhah his her's concubine.' Deut. 31. 1, 'And es *went* and spake these words unto Israel.' Hos. 3. 1, 'Then said the d unto me, *Go*, yet love a woman ved of her friend.' The word in connexions may not improperly be sidered as an expletive. Something ilar occurs in the New Testament, . 2. 17, 'And *came* and preached ce to you.' So also 1 Pet 3. 19, which also he *went* and preached the spirits in prison.'—The name of man here mentioned was Amram, the of Kohath, the son of Levi, Ex. 6. 20, and the name of the woman m he took to wife was Jochebed, sister of Kohath, and consequently aunt of Amram, Ex. 6. 20. Num. 26. 19. Marriage connexions between kindred thus nearly related was afterwards forbidden under the law, Lev. 18. 12, but more indulgence was granted in this and other respects in the early and unsettled state of the commonwealth.

2. *And the woman conceived*. The anxiety and apprehension naturally incident to the delicate situation in which Jochebed found herself, must have been aggravated by terrors more dreadful than the prospective pangs of child-birth, or the loss of life itself. As a wife and a mother in Israel, she was looking and longing for the birth of another manchild; but that fond expectation was as often dashed by the bitter reflection, that an order had gone forth which would in all probability consign her son, if she should bear one, to the jaws of the devouring crocodile of the Nile. Yet it would seem not improbable from the apostle's words, Heb. 11. 23, that some extraordinary presentiments in the minds of his parents accompanied the birth of this illustrious child, and strengthened the faith under which he was hidden for three months from the rage of the Egyptian dragon, which stood eager for his prey as soon as it should see the light, Rev. 12. 4.—¶ *When she saw him, that he was a goodly child*. Heb. טוב *tob, good*. The original term, as remarked on Gen. 39. 6, is used to denote bodily endowments, as well as the qualities of the heart, and its import may be learned from the corresponding Gr. phrase employed by Stephen, Acts, 7. 20, ασ τειος τω Θεω, *fair to God*, i. e. divinely or exceedingly fair. In Heb. 11. 23, the epithet is the same (ασ τειον) but rendered 'proper.' The implication obviously is, that an extraordinary beauty distinguished the

3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed slime and with pitch, and

smiling babe that now reposed in his mother's arms. To the fond eye of maternal affection *every* child is lovely, and we can only account for the strong language used here and elsewhere in regard to Moses, by supposing that his infant features possessed a grace and comeliness that were perhaps without a parallel. We must recognize in this a special providence, for there is no doubt that the uncommon beauty of the child was a strong motive with the parents for so anxiously aiming to secure it from harm. This is clearly intimated in the words of the apostle, Heb. 11. 23, 'By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw that he was a proper child,' &c. It may be supposed moreover that this circumstance was ordered by providence in order to afford to Pharoah's daughter a stronger motive for preserving the child. But the dearer the comfort the greater the care, and under their present circumstances we can easily imagine that every lovely lineament in the countenance of her child would weave a new fold of anguished anxiety in her own face as she gazed upon it, and thought of the jeopardy to which he was exposed. For the space of three months she was permitted, through her precautions, from day to day to fondle and nourish the helpless babe, though her heart trembled at the sound of every tread while so employed, just as the miser dreads the noise of approaching footsteps while surveying and counting over his hoarded wealth. But at the end of that period, the rigor of the search on the part of her enemies convinced her that farther concealment would be impracticable, and that she must part with her treasure.

3. *She took for him an ark of bulrushes*, &c. Heb. תבת גמא *tabath gomi*, *ark of bulrush*. The Egyptian papyrus.

The original term is derived verb signifying *to swallow, to to drink*, and is so named fro markably *absorbing* the wate grows, as appears from Job. 8 the *rush* (גמא *gomi*) grow up mire?' It is a plant growing banks of the Nile, and in grounds. The stalk is of a vi of a triangular form, and tap wards the top. At present it found more than ten feet long, a feet or little more of the lowe the stalk being covered with sharp-pointed leaves which over other like scales, and fortify t exposed part of the stem. It te in a tuft or crown of small gra ments, each about a foot long the middle each of these filame into four, and in the point of are four branches of flowers, the ation of which is not unlike a wheat in form, but is in fact a s husk. This singular vegetable for a variety of purposes, the p of which was the structure of b the manufacture of paper. In t the first, we are told by Plin piece of the acacia-tree was pu bottom to serve as a keel, to w plants were joined lengthwis first sewed together, then gath at stem and stern, and made means of a ligature. These ve still to be seen on the engrave and other monuments of Egyp tiquity. According to Dr. Sh vessels of bulrushes or papyr tioned in sacred and profane were no other than large fabric same kind with that of Mose from the introduction of pla stronger materials, are now la The prophet's words, Is. 18. 2 sendeth ambassadors by the s in *vessels of bulrushes* upon the

hild therein; and she laid *it* in
he flags by the river's brink.

4 e And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

e ch. 15. 20. Numb. 26. 59.

e supposed to allude to the same kind sailing craft. Pliny takes notice of he 'naves papyraceas armentaque Nili;' *hips made of the papyrus, and the quipments of the Nile;* and Lucan, the oet has, 'Conseritur bibula Memphi- is cymba papyro,' *the Memphian (or gyptian) boat is made of the thirsty pyrus,* where the epithet 'bibula,' *inking, soaking, thirsty* is particular- remarkable, as corresponding with reat exactness to the nature of the ant, and to its Hebrew name. The gyptian bulrush or papyrus required nch water for its growth; when there- re the river on whose banks it grew s reduced, it perished sooner than ner plants. This explains Job, 8. 11, ere the circumstance is referred to as image of transient prosperity.—— *Daubed it with slime and with pitch.* b. בחמר *ba-hemor, with bitumen,* or neral pitch. See Note on Gen. 11. 3. 'bitumen' cemented the rushes or ls together, the pitch served to keep the water. 'There seems to be con- rable analogy between the ark or t in which Moses was deposited, l the curious vessels which are at present day employed in crossing Tigris. They are perfectly circular shape, and are made with the leaves the date-palm, forming a kind of sket-work, which is rendered impervi- s to the water by being thickly coated th bitumen.' *Pict. Bib.*——¶ *Laid in the flags.* Heb. בסוף *bassuph, in e sea-weed, or sedge.* The *suph* was obably a general term for sea or river- ed. The Red Sea is always called, the Scriptures ים סוף *yam suph,* or e *weedy-sea,* as some suppose, from e great variety of marine vegetables hich grow in it, and which at low water e left in great quantities upon the ores. But see Note on Ex. 13. 18.

4. *And his sister stood afar off,* &c. His sister Miriam undoubtedly, as we have no account of his having any other. She was unquestionably older than Aaron, or she would have been unfit for such an office on this occasion. The incident makes it plain that the little ark, though made water-tight, was not deposited on the bosom of the river, where it would be borne away by the current, but on the margin of the stream, where perhaps the finder would infer that it had lodged, after having floated down from above. Throughout the whole of this transaction, which was no doubt supernaturally suggested, no mention is made of the father. That every thing was done with his privity and consent we cannot doubt, for the apostle couples both the parents in his encomium on their faith; but the case was probably one in which the faith of the mother was more decided and active than that of the father, and has therefore more prominence given it in the sacred narrative. The proceeding detailed is a beautiful illustration of the connexion which should always exist between the diligent use of means and a pious trust in Providence. Instead of sitting down in sullen despair, or passive reliance on divine interposition, every thing is done which can be done by human agency to secure the wished-for result. The careful mother pitches every seam and chink of the frail vehicle as anxiously as if its precious deposit were to owe its preservation solely to her care and diligence. Nor even yet does she think she has done enough. Miriam her daughter must go, and at a distance watch the event, and strange would it be if she did not herself in the mean time take a station where she could watch the watcher. And here we behold all the parties standing precisely

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5 ¶ And the [d] daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash *herself* at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid t

6 And when she had o she saw the child: and be babe wept. And she h passion on him, and said *one* of the Hebrew's child

[d] Acts 7. 21.

upon the line where the province of human sagacity, foresight, and industry ends, and providential succor begins. The mother has done her part. The rushes, the slime, and the pitch were her prudent and necessary preparations; and the great God has been at the same time preparing *his* materials, and arranging *his* instruments. He causes every thing to concur, not by miraculous influence, but by the simple and natural operation of second causes, to bring about the issue designed in his counsels from everlasting. The state of the weather, the flux of the current, the promenade of Pharaoh's daughter, the state of her feelings, the steps of her attendants, are all so overruled at that particular juncture, as to lead to the discovery, the rescue, and the disposal of the child! But let us not anticipate the thread of the story.

5. *The daughter of Pharoah came down to wash herself at the river.* Heb. על היאר *al ha-yeor*, *at* or *by the river*. Gr. επι τον ποταμον, to be translated in the same manner, implying that the washing, which was probably a religious ablution, and not a proper bathing, was performed just at the *river's brink*. The washing of Naaman the Syrian, on the other hand, is said to have been *in the Jordan* (בירדן *ba-yarden*) and not *at* it, because he entered further into the stream. We advert to the phraseology here principally for the purpose of showing the relation of the Gr. rendering to a parallel passage in Rev. 9. 14, 'Loose the four angels which are bound *at* (επι *at*, not *in*) the great river Euphrates;' i. e. the four angels which had hitherto been providentially restrained or confined *in the vicinity* of the great river Euphrates. here is a symbolical term fo *tions* or *people* over which th presented in prophecy as See Dan. 10. 3. The import o mand is, that those obstructio had hitherto opposed the iss and the desolating spread of political powers in the region upon the Euphrates, should n moved and free scope give These powers were the orig Ottoman empire, which, as it nounced by the sixth trumpe be destroyed by the sixth vi 16. 12.——¶ *She sent her mai it.* Heb. ותקרח *vattikkaheha, it;* i. e. she took it by the han maid; by which term is m maid who more immediately upon her, as the word (אמתה ferent from that (נערתיה) 'maidens.'

6. *She saw the child: and be babe wept.* Rather according Heb. 'And she saw him, the ch behold a male-infant weeping Eng. word 'babe,' as it does criminate the sex, is not an e adequate rendering of the origi *naar*, which strictly denotes *child*, and is here used expres that purpose.——¶ *She had com on him.* Or, Heb. תחמל *tahmo cifully spared* him. If there be ject in nature more calculated t other to interest and affect the s ble heart of woman, it was tha now presented itself to the eye Egyptian princess—a beautiful deserted by its parents, exposed most imminent peril, and expres the moving testimony of tears it

Then said his sister to Pharaoh's
aughter, Shall I go, and call to
e a nurse of the Hebrew wo-
n, that she may nurse the child
thee?
And Pharaoh's daughter said to
r, Go. And the maid went and
led the child's mother.
And Pharaoh's daughter said
to her, Take this child away and
is

hat misery of which it had not yet
ired the consciousness. The story
itself. The situation in which the
ld was found explained the cruel oc-
on. The covenant-sign which he
ied engraven on his flesh, declared
whom he belonged, and notwithstand-
the scruples which must have arisen
n his parentage, his outcast condi-
made an irresistible appeal to the
om of Pharaoh's daughter.

Then said his sister, &c. Who no
t came up and joined the train, as
y accident. If she had not been
viously instructed by her mother
t to say on the contingency of such
occurrence as now actually took
e, we cannot but refer this sugges-
on the part of a little girl to an im-
iate inward prompting from above.
else should it have entered her
ghts to propose making the *mother*
he exposed infant its *nurse?* Can
fail to acknowledge the secret hand
he Lord of hosts, 'who is wonderful
ounsel and excellent in working?'

*Take this child away and nurse
r me*, &c. No mere human writer
ld here have well forborne to dilate
lowing terms on the transports of
happy mother as she again clasped
beloved babe to her bosom, free
n the fear of having him again torn
n her. What a joyful change! The
mother permitted to do that for
cely hire and under royal protection
ch she would have given her life for
privilege of doing for nothing, could
have done it with safety to her

nurse it for me and I will give *thee* thy wages. And the woman took the child and nursed it.

10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became [e] her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

[e] Acts 7. 21.

child! 'I will give thee thy wages.' Wages, indeed! What 'wages' would not *she* have given for the extacy she now enjoyed in the prospect of acting the mother to the son of her womb! What sentiments of adoring wonder and grateful praise must have thrilled her heart in view of the overwhelming goodness so kindly and unexpectedly vouchsafed to her from the God of all comfort!

10. *She brought him*, &c. At what age the future deliverer of Israel was transferred from the care of his mother to the palace and the court of Egypt, we are not informed. It would seem from the history that he was old enough to have learnt the principles of his ancestral religion, in which his mother would not fail to instruct him; and though it was somewhat of a renewed trial to her to part with her son, under the apprehension that the influence of a heathen and hostile court might alienate his tender mind from the love of God and his people, yet she would doubtless infer from the past incidents of his life that something great was in store for him, and that the same tutelary providence which had watched over his infancy, would make his childhood and youth and mature age its special care. He came accordingly into the relation of an adopted son to Pharaoh's daughter, and was by her, for an end of which she little dreamed, 'trained up in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.' As the book of Revelation is constructed with a continual or running reference to the events of the Old Testament history,

11 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, [f] when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren,

[f] Acts 7. 23, 24. Hebr. 11. 24, 25, 26.

we cannot doubt that there is a real though covert allusion to the history of Moses in the vision, Ch. 12, of the dragon, the sun-clad woman, and the child to which she gave birth. The dragon's standing before the woman ready to devour her child as soon as it should be born, is strikingly in analogy with the bloody edict of Pharaoh, whom the prophets denominate the Egyptian dragon, Ezek. 29. 3, while the child's being caught up to God and his throne, has an equally distinct reference to the wonderful preservation and elevation of Moses as here described.——¶ *She called his name Moses.* Heb. משה *Mosheh*, from the verb משה *mashah*, *to draw out*, a term occurring Ps. 18. 16, 'He sent from above, he took me; he *drew me* (ימשני *yamsheni*) out of many waters;' where the Psalmist seems to liken his preservation to that of Moses, unless indeed, which we rather incline to believe, he is giving an allegorical history of the church from its earlier periods, and has here a designed but mystic allusion to the very person and deliverance of Moses, in whose preservation that of Israel was concentrated. It has indeed been a matter of dispute among critics whether the name were truly of Hebrew or Egyptian origin. Yet the former is most probable, as a Hebrew etymology seems to be designedly given it by the sacred writer. Although the Egyptians did not speak the Hebrew language, yet as it appears from Ex. 11. 2, that the two people lived in a great measure intermingled together, the language of each might have been to a considerable extent understood by the other; and in the present case it would not be unnatural that a Hebrew child should have bestowed upon it a Hebrew name.

and looked on their [g] burd
he spied an Egyptian sm
Hebrew, one of his brethr

[g] ch. 1. 11.

11. *When Moses was grow*
יגדל *yigdal*, *had become g*
in stature only, but in repu
ence, and consideration at cou
is in several unequivocal inst
force of the original, and it i
him by Stephen that he 'wa
both in word and deed,' as well
had attained the full age of fo
——¶ *Went out unto his breth*
looked on their burdens. He
בסבלתם *va-yar besiblotham.*
νοησας τον πονον αυτων, *consider*
labor. Chal. 'Saw their sc
Verbs of the senses often imp
Scripture idiom a connected wo
the emotions or affections of t
Here 'looking upon' is *viewi*
sympathy and compassion, hav
heart touched with the spectacl
29. 32, 'And Leah conceived an
son, and she called his name R
for she said, surely the Lord ha
ed upon my afflictions;' i. e. ha
cifully regarded. Eccl. 1. 16, 'M
had great experience of wisd
knowledge;' Heb. 'My heart sa
dom and knowledge.' Eccl. 2. 1,
in my heart, go to now, I will
thee with mirth, therefore *enjo*
sure;' Heb. '*see* pleasure.' Ps.
'Therefore shall I *see* (my desire
them that hate me.' We must
this as the incipient working
noble spirit which finally pro
Moses to forego the honors of th
of Egypt, and cast in his lot wi
despised people of Israel. Eas
affluence generally tend to dead
sensibilities of the heart to the
and woes of others. But Moses
never to have forgotten his extra
nor to have lost his sympathies
the chosen race. He remembered
the oppressed and suffering Isra

re his nearest and dearest relations, though now ignorant perhaps of t which he was destined to act in ir deliverance, he was unable to rel- a solitary selfish joy, while *they* re eating the bread and drinking the ter of affliction. He therefore goes to look upon their misery, or as phen says, Acts, 7. 23, 'It came into heart to visit his brethren,' and ugh for the present he can neither ove nor alleviate it, yet he is deter- ed to evince his willingness to be a taker in it. But the most fitting mmentary upon this passage is found the words of the apostle, Heb. 11. —26, 'By faith Moses, when he was e to years, refused to be called the of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing er to suffer affliction with the peo- of God, than to enjoy the pleasures in for a season; esteeming the re- ach of Christ greater riches than the sures in Egypt: for he had respect the recompense of the reward.' By refusing to be called the son of Pha- 's daughter,' we are not probably nderstand that he rejected *the nom- appellation*, but according to the force of the orignal, which has gence rather to *the reality of things* to their *denomination*, he refused e *treated* as her son, he *positively ined* all the honor and aggrandize- t which was implied in that rela- This was his deliberate choice, perhaps no man was ever called to ke a choice under circumstances more ng, or made one which redounded e to his credit and glory than this Moses. It is to be remembered that was at this time of mature age, 'full y years old,' says Stephen. He had ched the grand climacteric of life, his faculties perfectly ripened, and judgment calm, unclouded, and dis- sionate. Were not this the case, he been now just emerging from th, with all the sanguine and enthu- tic ardor of dawning manhood upon him, it might have been regarded as the effect of a rash excitement, as a sudden sally of the buoyant temperament of his age, and one which he would afterwards have regretted or condemned. Had it occurred later in life, when the powers and energies of his mind were on the wane, when the pursuits of ambition and the prospects of pleasure had vanished, it might have been stigmatized as the act of an old worn-out courtier, whose disgusted satiety of this world's good had driven him to the sorry refuge of seeking something better in another. It might easily have been characterised as the mean compromise of a man in his dotage with an uneasy conscience, for having squandered his youthful prime and his manly meridian in the service of the world to the neglect of his Maker. But every such imputation is cut off by the facts of the case. It was not a step prompted by the precipitate ardor of youth, nor one dictated by the timid or sordid policy of age. It was a decision formed under circumstances in which *deep principle*, and not a *passionate impulse*, must have been the ruling motive; for while in a worldly sense he had nothing to hope from a transfer of himself, he had, on the other hand, every thing to lose. We have only to appeal to our knowledge of human nature to learn the difficulty, and consequently the virtue, of such a sacrifice as Moses now made. When we compare the respective states of the Egyptian and the Israelitish people, it would seem to human view that the lot of the meanest Egyptian was preferable to that of the highest Israelite. Yet Moses voluntarily gave up the one for the other; 'the honors of the palace for the ignominy of the brick-yard.' Though he was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and, for aught that appears to the contrary, was the presumptive heir to the crown, yet he refused not to come down from this preeminent distinction, and to cast in his lot with

the despised and embondaged seed of Jacob. History affords us some few instances where kings have laid aside their purple and abdicated their thrones. But in all such cases they have descended to a rank in private life which was surrounded by ease, affluence, and continued respectability; so that their sacrifices were relieved by many countervailing considerations. But Moses descended from the dignity of a court to the degradation of a slave. What was there in the vaunted condescension of Dioclesian or Charles the Vth. to be compared with this? And where, in all the annals of time, shall we find *such* a surrender made from *such* motives?——

¶ *Spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew.* Probably one of the task-masters. As the original word for *smiting* (מכה *makkeh*) is the same with that rendered *slew* (יך *yak*) in the next verse, it is to be presumed that the Egyptian was actually attempting to kill the Hebrew, and that had it not been for the intervention of Moses, he would have effected his purpose. Thus Ps. 136. 17, 'To him which *smote* (מכה *makkeh*) great kings;' i. e. that slew. It is important to view this incident in connexion with what Stephen says of it, Acts, 7. 23—25, 'And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.' It is undoubtedly to be supposed that Moses was now acting under a divine commission, and that an immediate impulse from the Spirit of God prompted him to the deed here recorded. This is to be inferred from the words of Stephen, 'for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them;' implying that Moses himself understood this to be the fact. It is however worthy of note that Diodorus Siculus informs us that a law existed in Egypt, which might have been at this time in force. 'That whoever saw his fellow-creature either killed by another, or violently assaulted, and did not either apprehend the murderer, or rescue the oppressed if he could; or if he could not, made not an information thereof to the magistrate, himself should be put to death.' For aught that can be affirmed to the contrary, Moses might have been warranted on this ground alone in proceeding to the extremity he did. The act however cannot be pleaded as a precedent on occasions that are not similar. It bore a striking resemblance to the conduct of Phineas on another occasion, Num. 25. 7, 13, a conduct which was certainly approved of God. If it be objected that the secrecy observed by Moses both in performing the act and in disposing of the body, is scarcely consistent with the idea of his being empowered by the call and authority of God to execute his pleasure on this occasion, it may be observed, that as his calling, though clear to himself, had not yet been publicly manifested or accredited, it was fitting that a temporary concealment should be drawn over the present occurrence. Thus Ehud, Judg. 3. 21, though moved by an influence from above, slew Eglon king of M[illegible] in a private chamber; and Gid[eon] Judg. 6. 27, before his office of deliv[erer] was publicly known, demolished [Baal's] altar of Baal by night. Again, if it be asked what reason Moses had to suppose that his brethren would have understood that he was acting by a divine commission, it may be answered, the marvellous circumstances of [his] birth and preservation, and subsequent training in the court of Pharaoh, were doubtless matters well known and much talked of among the nation of Israel, from which they might reasonably infer that he was raised up for some extraor-

12 And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he [h] slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

13 And [i] when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong,

[h] Acts 7. 24. [i] Acts 7. 26.

Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

14 And he said, [k] Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

[k] Acts 7. 27, 28.

nary end. It was *before* this time, that Stephen's testimony assures us he had 'become mighty in words and in deeds.' And when he was seen to come forth *alone*, and take vengeance on one of their oppressors, it might have been presumed that he regarded himself as directed by God in what he had undertaken. But the result showed that the expectation of being recognized in his true character was premature.

12. *He looked this way and that way*, &c. Evidently implying that he was not exempt from some inward wavering of spirit in thus entering upon his mission. But if oppression maketh a wise man mad, we may easily perceive that his natural indignation, joined to a conscious impulse from above, was sufficient to urge him forward to the act recorded.

13. *Behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together.* Heb. נצרים *nitzim*, *fighting*. Whatever were the occasion of this unhappy contest, it must have been mortifying to Moses to behold it. If they had not enemies enough in their common cruel taskmasters, they fall into strife with each other! Alas, that sufferings in common should fail to unite the professing people of God in the strictest bonds of brotherhood.——*He said to him that did the wrong.* Heb. לרשע *larasha*, *to the wicked one*. The Gr. however renders very correctly τῳ ἀδικουντι, *to the wrong-doer*, and Stephen confirms the same version, Acts, 7. 26, 'Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye *wrong* (ἀδικειτε) one to another?' In the case of the offending Egyptian Moses administered reproof by a mortal blow, but he tries to gain a contending brother by mild and gentle means. In the former instance he acted more as a judge; in the present, as a peace maker. His question has indeed the air of being sternly proposed, but there was nothing in it which could not or should not have been said by one Israelite to another; and we ought never to think it going beyond the bounds of charity or duty, where we are satisfied on which side the wrong lies, to call an offender to account by an equally plain interrogation. Every man should look upon himself as at least so far appointed a guardian of the general interests of justice and of right as to expostulate in pointed terms with the injurious and overbearing.

14. *Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?* Heb. 'Who set thee for a man a prince and a judge over us?' Moses intended merely to administer a mild and friendly reproof, and yet how roughly is his admonition received. The man could not easily have given a plainer testimony of his guilt than by such a choleric reply. What authority did Moses assume in thus gently reproving a manifest outrage? Does one need a commission to perform an act of real kindness, and to endeavor to make friends of apparent enemies? Yet how boldly does he challenge his authority as if he were imperious and presuming. It is rare virtue ingenuously to confess our faults and to receive correction with meekness!——¶ *Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?* Heb. הלהרגני אתה אמר

15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But [l]Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by [m]a well.

[l] Acts 7. 29. Hebr. 11. 27.

[m] Gen. 24. 11. & 29. 2.

halhorgani attah omer, sayest thou to kill me? See Note on Gen. 20. 11. We here behold a striking specimen of the base constructions which an ill mind will put upon the best words and actions. What right had he to charge Moses with a murderous intention? He had indeed slain an Egyptian, but an Egyptian was not a Hebrew, nor had he any grounds to suppose that Moses would go farther than the provocation warranted. The occasion called simply for a reproof, and a reproof was the head and front of his offending; yet the aggressor would turn away the force of his rebuke by pretending that he aimed at nothing less than his life! Besides, why should he cast the slaying of the Egyptian in Moses' teeth, when he had really done it from his regard to his own countrymen? Should not this quarrelsome Hebrew have taken it rather as a proof of Moses' favorable feelings towards himself than as an evidence of a wish to harm him? If he had not loved the Hebrews would he have dispatched one of their enemies? But reason and humanity speak in vain to those whom a guilty conscience leads to pervert the wisest and the kindest counsels.——¶ *Surely this thing is known;* i. e. his slaying the Egyptian. Heb. הדבר *haddabar, this word.* See Note on Gen. 15. 1. Moses was satisfied from this that the Hebrew whom he had liberated the day before by slaying the Egyptian, had divulged the circumstance, and not doubting that it would soon come to the ears of the king, began to be in dread of his life.

15. *When Pharaoh heard this thing,* &c. He soon learnt that his fears were well founded. Pharaoh was apprised of the fact of his having put an Egyptian to death, and Moses was at once marked as the victim of his wrath. This was perhaps not so much with a view to avenge the death of a single individual of the Egyptian race, as because Moses had by this act discovered himself to be a friend and favorer of the oppressed Israelites, and given the king reason to suspect that he was secretly cherishing the purpose of one day attempting to effect their liberation. His only safety therefore was in flight. This would subject him to great trials and privations, and had his heart been less firmly fixed in the great purpose which he had adopted, he would have sought rather to make his peace with the king, his benefactor, and to retain his place at court. But he had made his election, and now chose rather to wander through dreary deserts than to be reconciled to the enemies of his people. The providence which thus withdrew the destined agent of deliverance from the field of action in the very outset of his work, would seem at first view extremely mysterious and adverse. But infinite wisdom saw that he needed a quite different training from that which he would receive in a luxurious court, in order to fit him [for] the hard services which awaited [him]. He sends him to school therefore [forty] forty years in the desert to qualify [him] the better for leading his people thro[ugh] *their* forty years sojourn in the des[ert] 'God,' says Henry, 'fetches a w[ide] compass in his plans, but his eye [is] continually upon the grand point [in] which he aims.'—It is not to be s[up]posed that there is any real discrepa[ncy] between this passage and Heb. 11. 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fear[ing] the wrath of the king.' The Apo[stle] alludes not to his flight into Midian but to his final departure from Egypt

16 ▫ Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: ◦ and they came and drew *water*, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

▫ ch. 3. 1. ◦ Gen. 24. 11. & 29. 10. 1 Sam. 9. 11.

17 And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and ▪ watered their flock.

▪ Gen. 29. 10.

the head of the children of Israel.—¶ *Dwelt in the land of Midian.* Heb. ישב *yesheb*, *sat down*; the same word in the original with that applied in the ensuing clause to his seating himself by the well. Probably in both cases the time implied is that of his *first arrival* in Midian, the one referring us in general to the *country* in which he stopped on his route, the other to the *particular place* which was the scene of the incidents subsequently related. Coming to that land he *halted* in his sojourning, and finding a refreshing well of water he *sat down* or *tarried* a longer time than usual by the side of it. Otherwise we seem to be forced to the awkward construction that the dwelling mentioned in our translation, which implies somewhat of a permanent abode, was *prior* to his *sitting by the well*, which evidently is not the sense of the passage. —Midian was a country in Arabia Petræa, deriving its name from Midian, the fourth son of Abraham by Keturah. It was situated on the south of the Dead Sea and the land of Moab, and probably comprehended the whole country, as far [illegible]th as the Red Sea. It is at least we [illegible]ain, that if the country of Midian of t[illegible] not actually reach to Sinai, there n c[illegible] colonies of the Midianites who [illegible]led near that mount, and who also u[illegible]e the surrounding districts the name [illegible] the 'Land of Midian.' Among those [illegible]migrants who preserved the worship [illegible] God in comparative purity when lost [illegible]ongst their countrymen in the north, [illegible]s Jethro, with whose family Moses th[illegible]e comes into connexion.

16. *The priest of Midian had seven daughters.* Heb. כהן *kohen*. Chal. it 'the prince of Midian.' The original Je[illegible]rd signifies 'prince' as well as 'priest,' as is shown in the Note on Gen. 41. 18, and accordingly in the early ages of the world both these offices were often united in one and the same person. The humble occupation of his daughters will be no objection to this view of the title, if the difference between ancient and modern customs be duly considered. See Note on Gen. 48. 45. Nearly all the ancient versions, besides the Chaldee, adhere to the sense of 'priest;' but whether he were the priest of a true or false religion, is not so clear. Being in all probability descended from Midian the son of Abraham by Keturah, it is perhaps most reasonable to infer that he retained the leading doctrines of the faith of his great progenitor, though possibly corrupted in some measure by the admixture of errors originating in the surrounding systems of heathen idolatry. From what we are subsequently informed of Jethro, he seems to have possessed a knowledge of the true God, and to have been imbued with sentiments of piety; and this supposition is strengthened when we consider the improbability of Moses' entering into a marriage alliance with the family of an idolater.

17. *The shepherds came and drove them away.* Heb. יגרשום *yegareshum*, where the pronominal suffix answering to 'them' is in the masculine, and not in the feminine gender; from which we are doubtless to understand that the daughters of Reuel were accompanied by men-servants who were under their direction. It would be strange indeed for a company of unprotected females to be thus employed, and equally strange, if they were without assistance, that such savage rudeness should be prac-

18 And when they came to q Reuel their father, he said, How *is it that* ye are come so soon to-day?

19 And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew *water* enough for us, and watered the flock.

20 And he said unto his daughters, And where *is* he? why *is* it *that* ye have left the man? call him, that he may r eat bread.

q Numb. 10. 29. ch. 3. 1. & 4. 18. & 18. 1. &c.

r Gen. 31. 54. & 43. 25.

tised toward them by the shepherds. See Note on Gen. 29. 3.——¶ *Moses stood up and helped them.* Heb. קם וירשען *yakom va-yoshian, arose and saved them.* Gr. ερρυσατο αυτας, *delivered them.* Here again we are probably required to suppose a fact not expressly mentioned in the sacred record, viz. that Moses travelled with attendants. Joining his servants with those of Reuel, a party was formed sufficiently strong to overpower the shepherd-boors who had so rudely attempted to drive away the flocks of the young women.——¶ *Watered their flock.* Heb. צאנם *tzonam.* Helped to water them. Here too the pronominal suffix 'their' is in the masculine gender.

18. *Came to Reuel their father.* The assignment of the names Reuel, or Raguel (Num. 10. 29), Jethro and Hobab, to the proper persons is no easy matter. It is supposed by many that Jethro and Reuel were but different names of the same person. Others consider Reuel as the father of Jethro, and the grand-father of the maidens here spoken of, but called their father in conformity to a very common idiom in the original, of which see examples, Gen. 31. 43. 2 Sam. 19. 25. 2 Kings, 14. 3. 16. 2. 18. 3. So Targ. Jon. 'They came to Reguel, their father's father.' But as Reuel seems obviously to have been the same person as the priest of Midian, who had the seven daughters, an office which he probably would not have held had his father been alive, and as he is the one who is said v. 21, to have given Moses his daughter to wife, an act more appropriate to a father than to a grandfather, provided both were living, as it is clear they were if they were different persons; we cannot but give a decided preference to the former opinion, which makes Jethro and Reuel the same person, but, for reasons now unknown to us, called by different names. As to Hobab, mentioned afterwards, Num. 10. 29, he is expressly affirmed to be the son of Reuel (Raguel) 'Moses' father-in-law,' which would seem to preclude all controversy on the subject. But see Note in loc.——¶ *How is it that ye are come so soon to-day.* Heb. מהרתן בא *miharten bo, hastened to come.*

19. *An Egyptian delivered us,* &c. This they inferred from his speech and dress, or they had learned from his own mouth the country from which he came.——¶ *Drew (water) enough for us.* Heb. דלה דלה *daloh dalah, drawing drew.* The word 'enough' is inserted in our translation in order to bring the expression somewhat nearer to the emphasis of the original.

20. *Why is it that ye have left the man?* It is not, we presume, to be construed as a breach of propriety on [illegible] part of the daughters, that they did [illegible] invite Moses home to their father's house. It would have had a [illegible] questionable air had they introduced a stranger into the paternal mansion without any previous notice to its proper head. On the contrary, they demeaned themselves with all the decorous observe appropriate to their sex. It does not appear even that they solicited protection, but modestly received it; and when rendered they rather looked than thanks than uttered them. This sufficient, for no noble or sensible mind like that of Moses, would be in danger

21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses [s] Zipporah his daughter.

[s] ch. 4. 25. & 18. 2.

22 And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name [t] Gershom; for he said, I have been [u] a stranger in a strange land.

[t] ch. 18. 3. [u] Acts 7. 29. Hebr. 11. 13, 14.

of interpreting the instincts of maidenly reserve into an ungrateful return for generous services. But what they failed to say to Moses himself they no doubt said *for* him to their father, and were happy to be able, under his sanction, to express their thanks by ministering all in their power to his comfort as a guest. ——¶ *That he may eat bread.* That is, partake of an entertainment. See Note on Gen. 21. 14.

21. *Moses was content to dwell with the man.* Heb. יואל *yoel, was willing;* or perhaps more strictly, *prevailed upon himself, adopted the resolution.* The word occurs in the following passages; Gen. 18. 27, 'Behold now I *have taken upon me* to speak unto the Lord;' i. e. have persuaded myself. Josh. 7. 7, 'Would to God *we had been content*, and dwelt on the other side Jordan;' i. e. had prevailed upon ourselves. Judg. 19. 6, '*Be content*, I pray thee, and tarry all night;' i. e. consent. 2 Sam. 7. 29, 'Therefore now *let it please thee* to bless the house of thy servant;' i. e. be thou willing. With characteristic brevity, Moses says nothing of the previous proposition and negotiation which led to this arrangement, but the simple record of the compact to remain is alone transmitted. The nature of the services to be rendered as to perform is not here specified, nor, it would seem, was it in the case of Jacob in similar circumstances, but we learn from the following of the ensuing chapter, what might be inferred from the manners and habits of those pastoral tribes, that the humble occupation of a shepherd was that in which the illustrious exile now consented to engage. Being thus brought into daily intimacy with kindred minds, it was natural that his intercourse with Jethro's family should result, as it did, in a union with one of the daughters. ——¶ *He gave Moses Zipporah his daughter;* to whom reference is made Numb. 12. 1, 'And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian.' The original has 'Cushite' instead of 'Ethiopian,' not, probably, because her family was descended from Cush, or that she had the features and complexion of the modern Ethiopian race, but simply from the fact that they inhabited a country to which the name of Cush or Ethiopia was applied. See Pict. Bib. p. 137.

22. *He called his name Gershom,* &c. Heb. גרשם *gëreshom,* which appears to be a compound made up of גר *gër, stranger,* and שם *sham, there.* Others take the final syllable שם to be an adjective derived from the root שמם *shamam, to be desolate,* implying a *lonely* or *desolate stranger.* The import however of this member of the word is of little consequence, as its main significancy is concentrated in that of *stranger* conveyed by the other. The Gr. version here adds: 'And she conceived again and bare a second son; and he called his name Eliezer, saying, For the God of my father is my helper, and hath delivered me from the hand of Pharaoh.' This addition, which is transferred also into the Vulg., was borrowed from Ex. 18. 4, where nearly the same words occur. The birth of a second son is also expressly mentioned in this connexion by Stephen, Acts, 7. 29, 'Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, *where he begat two sons.*' At what period of Moses' forty years sojourning in Midian his marriage with Zipporah, or the birth

23 ¶ And it came to pass, [x] in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel [y] sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and [z] their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage.

24 And God [a] heard their groaning, and God [b] remembered his [c] covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

[x] ch. 7. 7. Acts 7. 30. [y] Numb. 20. 16. Deut. 26. 7. Ps. 12. 5. [z] Gen. 18. 20. ch. 3. 9. & 22. 23, 27. Deut. 24. 15. James 5. 4.

[a] ch. 6. 5. [b] ch. 6. 5. Ps. 105. 8, 42. & 106. 45. [c] Gen. 15. 14. & 46. 4.

of his children took place, we have no means of ascertaining. From the incident mentioned, Ex. 4. 24, 25, it has generally been supposed that the children were then young, as one of them was circumcised on that occasion by his mother. But it strikes us as extremely improbable that Moses should have deferred his marriage for near forty years after entering Midian, or that being married shortly after that time, so long an interval should have elapsed before he became a father. It is to be remembered that he was at the time mentioned, ch. 4. 24, 25, on the way to Egypt, and is it conceivable that he was *then* the father of two small children? True indeed it is said, Ex. 4. 20, 'that he took his wife and his sons and set them upon an ass, and returned to Egypt,' from which it is argued that the sons must have been mere children, or they could not have been carried, with their mother, on a single ass. But this objection will be obviated in our note on that passage, and as the advanced age of the eldest son at this time is an important item in our interpretation of the context in question, we are forced for the present to lay great stress on the intrinsic probability that Moses was both married and begat one at least of his two sons very early during his residence in Midian.

23. *It came to pass in process of time.* Heb. בימים הרבים ההם *ba-yamim harubbim hahem, in those many days.* Gr. μετα δε τας ημερας τας πολλας εκεινας, *after those many days.* On this phraseology Ainsworth remarks that the Heb. ב *in* is here rightly translated by the Gr. μετα, *after*, as is clear from Num. 28. 26, 'After your weeks (בשבעתיכם *in your weeks*),' and elsewhere. So in the New Testament, Mark, 13. 24, '*In* those days' is parallelled by Mat. 24. 29, '*After* the tribulation of those days.' But it is perhaps sufficient to understand by the phrase simply that *in the course* and *towards the latter part* of the forty years of Moses' sojourn in Midian the king of Egypt died. As to the *precise* date of the event, it was not important that we should be informed of it.——¶ *Sighed by reason of the bondage.* The time was now fast approaching in which the Most High had proposed to visit and redeem his people, and still no symptoms of favor as yet are perceived. On the contrary, though Egypt had changed its sovereign in the mean time, yet the seed of Jacob experienced no mitigation of their distress. Every change which they had undergone was rather a change from evil to worse, till at length their calamities are represented, like the blood of murdered Abel, as having a voice and crying to heaven for vengeance.

24. *God remembered his covenant, &c.* There is a pitch of oppression which will not fail to awaken the wrath of heaven. The groans and tears extorted by violent wrong, especially if they come from humbled and penitent hearts, will pierce the ear of God, and prove a presage of deliverance. 'Cum latera duplicantur Moses adest,' *when the bricks are doubled, Moses is at hand.* Yet it seems that in the present case it was not solely from a regard to their miseries that God determined to inter-

25 And God [d]looked upon the children of Israel, and God [e]had respect unto *them*.

[d] ch. 4. 31. 1 Sam. 1. 11. 2 Sam. 16. 12. Luke 1. 25.

[e] ch. 3. 7.

fere. His own faithfulness was at stake. He remembered his covenant, and his covenant is his engagement. To the three patriarchs here mentioned he had solemnly bound himself to enlarge, to prosper, and to bless their seed, and after the lapse of a certain period to bring them out of bondage and plant them in the land of promise. As this period had now nearly expired, and the enemies of Israel by making their condition to the utmost degree intolerable were doing what in them lay to crush and exterminate the race, and thus counteract the fulfilment of the divine promises, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob saw that it was time to awake, and make bare his arm, lest his word should fail for evermore. What is meant by God's 'remembering' his covenant we have explained in the Note on Gen. 8. 1. It is an *effective* remembrance evinced by the *performance* of some special act of his care. We may understand it the better by conceiving of its opposite. God is said to *forget* or *not to remember*, when he fails to assist or deliver. And in like manner his *looking upon* a people is the opposite of *turning his back* upon them, and the term for one of the most fearful forms of the divine judgments.

25. *God had respect unto them.* Heb. יָדַע *yeda, knew* them. That is, compassionately regarded them, tenderly cared for them. On the peculiar import of the word 'know,' see Note on Ex. 1. 8.

Remarks.—(1.) The doctrine of a special overruling providence is no where more impressively taught than in the early history of Moses; and in contrasting the perils which surrounded his infancy with the security and comfort with which we can rear our own offspring, we have abundant grounds of gratitude. Yet it should not be forgotten that whatever care we may exercise for our little ones, or whatever guardianship we may afford them, they as really require the preserving mercy of heaven when reposing in their cradles or sporting in our parlors, as did Moses when enclosed in his ark of bulrushes and exposed to the waves or the ravenous tenants of the Nile.

(2.) It is doing no violence to the spirit of the sacred text to conceive of our heavenly Father as saying to the believer when presenting his infant-offspring in baptism, 'Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.' Take him out of the pollution that is in the world through sin, and bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Take him from the many perils which beset him by the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life, and the malice of Satan, and establish him in faith, hope, and love, as a devoted servant of the Savior, and verily thou shalt by no means lose thy reward.

(3.) What a powerful principle is true faith! And how illustrious the exhibition of it in the choice of Moses! We know how hardly men are persuaded to resign a *little* wealth, to forego a *little* honor, to resign the *faintest* prospect of rank and power. Yet Moses freely gave up *all* that was tempting in this respect, as a noble sacrifice of sense to faith! Several of the circumstances which rendered this sacrifice so remarkable have been already considered. Consider in addition, that there were other than selfish objections to be overcome. Pharaoh's daughter had strong claims on the gratitude of Moses. He was a poor foundling, rescued from the peril of a watery grave, by the kindness of his benefactor; and no one acquainted

with the sympathy and tenderness of woman's heart needs to be told, how strong is the attachment formed for a helpless infant thus strangely and unexpectedly thrown upon her hands. A deep and affectionate interest would inevitably spring up in her bosom towards her orphan charge, an interest all the deeper and stronger from having no children of her own. Now can we suppose that Moses when he had attained to years of reflection and was made acquainted with the events of his history, could have been insensible to what he owed to his preserver? Would it not be a mighty struggle to tear himself away from one who had been a mother to him from his infancy; who had watched with kind solicitude over his advances from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood; whose heart had exulted to note his expanding intellect as he grew learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and to see him entitling himself by his intrinsic merit to the station to which he had been fortuitously raised? Shall he then summon up an iron resolve, sunder the ties that bound him to his earliest benefactor, and bid her adieu for ever? Shall he do this when *in* doing it he would seem to be resigning the only hope of aiding and of finally emancipating his brethren? For if he would consent to be called the son of his patroness, retaining his place in the court, and watching the events of providence, some opportunity might at length occur for effecting an object so near his heart. But we see the conviction of present duty outweighing every other consideration, and triumphing over the promptings of affection and the dictates of worldly policy. So complete is the dominion of Faith over his whole soul that he resolves to take the momentous step, though assured that he should thereby plunge into affliction and incur reproach. But the afflictions anticipated were the 'afflictions of the people of God,' and the reproach incurred 'the reproach of Christ,' and these he well knew would be *sanctified* to any one who should encounter them for conscience sake.

CHAPTER III.

Of the events which marked the history of Moses during the forty years of his residence in the land of Midian, the Scriptures have furnished us with no detailed account. As Moses is himself the historian of his own life, it is reasonable to infer from his silence that the period was not distinguished by any occurrences sufficiently important in his view to deserve a record. His days probably passed quietly away in the wonted discharge of his duties as a shepherd, and the shepherd too of another man's flock. His situation was no doubt favorable to contemplation and communion with God. He could scarcely fail to make progress in that divine knowledge which would do more to qualify him for his future mission than all the learning he had acquired in Egypt. The life too which he led was happily adapted to work within him that hardihood of constitution and character, of which he would afterwards stand so much in need, and of which the sequel of his story affords us so many striking instances. Still, it could not but be a severe trial of his faith to find year after year elapsing, and the prime and vigor of his age apparently wearing away, while no tokens from above indicated that the great work of his vocation was any nearer at hand. Yet he seems meekly to have endured as seeing Him who is invisible, and to have evinced that true wisdom which consists in waiting for and following the call of heaven instead of running before it. It was evidently no part of his design to hold up for admiration his own example of submissive patience, yet the Holy Spirit is

CHAPTER III.

NOW Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, [a] the priest of Midian: and he led the

[a] ch. 2. 16.

not restrained from presenting his conduct in such a light as will suggest the most useful lessons to all succeeding ages.

1. *Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro.* Heb. רֹעֶה הָיָה אֶת צֹאן *hayah roeh eth tzon, was feeding the flock,* or *acting the shepherd towards.* See Note on Gen. 37. 2. He who is before, Ex. 2. 18, called Reuel, is here denominated Jethro. Our reasons for thinking them the same person have already been given. In Num. 10. 29, he is called Raguel, and is expressly said to have been the father of Hobab.—There is no doubt a very marked contrast between Moses in the court of Egypt, making his abode in a palace, and surrounded with all the splendors of royalty, and Moses a humble hireling shepherd, leading his flocks over the rough places of the desert, sleeping often in the open air, exposed to heat and to cold, to weariness and watchings, and living upon the coarsest fare. But as we know that he had voluntarily and deliberately made the exchange of one condition for the other, and as we know too the motives by which he had been governed in doing it, it would be no matter of surprise could we be assured, as was doubtless the fact, that he was as truly happy while thus traversing the rocky region of Midian, his tent his only shelter, as when treading the marble pavements of Egyptian halls, or reposing on couches of state, with a crowd of menials prompt to do his pleasure. As it was from a supreme regard to the glory of God that he had entered this humble sphere, so God was not unmindful of the sacrifices he had made, nor did he leave him without witness of his special favor. Desert

flock to the back side of the desert, and came to [b] the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb.

[b] ch. 18. 5. 1 Kings 19. 8.

and lonely places have often been those which God has selected for the most signal displays of himself to his servants; nor is it superfluous to remark, that such manifestations are usually made, as here, not to the idle or slothful, but to those who are busied in the duties of their calling.——¶ *He led the flock to the back side of the desert,* &c Gr. ηγαγεν τον ποιμνιον, *under the wilderness.* Vulg. 'Ad interiora deserti,' *to the interior parts of the desert.* Chal. 'To the place of fair pasturage in the desert.' The expression is probably equivalent to a great way into the desert.——¶ *Came to the mountain of God,* so called, not so much from its great height, as tall cedars are called cedars of God, &c. (see Note on Gen. 23. 6), as by anticipation, from several very remarkable events having afterward occurred upon this memorable mount tending to confer upon it a sacred character. It was here (1.) that God appeared to Moses in the bush; (2.) that he manifested his glory at the delivery of the law; (3.) that Moses with his rod brought water out of the rock; (4.) that by lifting up his hands he made Joshua to prevail against Amelek; (5.) that he fasted twice forty days and forty nights; (6.) that from hence he brought the two tables of the law; and (7.) that Elijah was vouchsafed a glorious vision. The Chal. renders it, 'the mount where the Glory of the Lord was revealed.'——¶ *Even to Horeb.* Heb. חֹרֵב *horeb,* i. e. *dryness,* from the character of the soil; it being a dry, sterile, bleak, rocky region. The names 'Horeb' and 'Sinai' are interchanged in the Scriptures: and modern travellers give such varied accounts of them, that we are left in great uncertainty with regard to their original

2 And [c] the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed.

[c] Deut. 33. 16. Isai 63. 9. Acts 7. 30.

position. They may be considered as parts of one vast eminence in the midst of the surrounding desert, the upper region of which forms an irregular circle of thirty or forty miles in diameter. This region contains the highest mountains of the peninsula, whose shagged and pointed peaks, and steep and shattered sides, render it clearly distinguishable from all the rest of the country in view. Abrupt cliffs of granite, from six to eight hundred feet in height, whose surface is blackened by the sun, surround the avenues leading to the elevated region, to which the name of Sinai, at the present day, is specifically applied. The cliffs enclose the mountain on three sides, leaving the east and north-east sides only, towards the gulf of Akaba, more open to the view. Further information respecting this remarkable mountainous tract will be given in tracing the course of the children of Israel in their march from Egypt to Canaan.

2. *The angel of the Lord appeared unto him*, &c. Of the scriptural import of the word 'angel' we have given a somewhat extended view in the Note on Gen. 16. 7, with which compare Note on Gen. 24. 7. It is properly a term of *office*, and not of *nature*, and is used to denote not only human and spiritual *messengers*, but also any of the impersonal agents, such as winds, fires, pestilences, remarkable dispensations, &c., which serve as a *medium* to make known the divine will, or to illustrate the divine operation in nature or providence. In fact, one of the most frequent uses of the term is as *a personification of divine judgments*. Thus 2 Kings, 19. 35, 'And it came to pass that the Angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand.' The effect here described is very generally conceded to have been produced by a *pestilential wind* of the desert, which is personified, and termed an *angel*. So the pestilence which occurred in consequence of David's numbering the people, 2 Sam. 24. 15, 16, in like manner represented as the work of *an angel*. The destruction of the first-born in Egypt, Ex. 12. 23, 29, is doubtless to be viewed in the same light. Though cut off by the direct supernatural judgment of the Most High, yet the agency is personified and represented as *a destroying angel*. The language of the Psalmist, Ps. 78. 49, undoubtedly requires the same construction; 'He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath and indignation and trouble *by sending evil angels* among them;' i. e. the judgments of the plagues. In the New Testament the same mode of speech occurs, Acts, 12. 23, 'And immediately *the angel of the Lord* smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.' Here the judgment itself, the fatal disease with which Herod died, was the angel intended in the text. But if such language was used in reference to *vindictive judgments* extraordinarily inflicted, there is no reason to doubt that *merciful visitations*, or in fact any kind of *rare, wonderful*, and *astounding* occurrences that happen somewhat out of the ordinary course of providence, should be set forth in a similar figurative or symbolical diction. Thus when it is said, Dan. 6. 22, that 'God had sent his *Angel* and shut the lions' mouths, that they should not hurt Daniel,' it is not necessary to understand the literal presence of an angel, or spiritual being, but simply, that by the special interposition or influence of

the Almighty, the ravenous beasts were restrained from acting according to their instincts. The principle on which this interpretation rests is well expressed by Reland (Dissert. de Samarit. 7. § 7.), 'That with whatever instrument God unites his own virtue, so as to animate it, and to work in, with, and by it, that instrument is called *an angel*.' Accordingly, even a dream, a vision, a voice from heaven, may be so denominated. But the appellation seems to be in a particular manner bestowed upon the *theophanies*, or special divine manifestations of which we so frequently read in the Old Testament as made to the patriarchs and prophets. The *Shekinah*, or visible material symbol of glory, is undoubtedly, in repeated instances, called *the angel of the Lord*, inasmuch as it was the medium or vehicle through which the Divinity was pleased to reveal himself to the outward senses. Thus the Shekinah in the pillar of cloud and fire which guided the march of the Israelites is called, Ex. 14. 19, *the angel of the Lord*. At the same time, in all such cases an intelligent agent, a spiritual being, or, in other words, Jehovah himself, is doubtless to be considered as really but invisibly present in and associated with the visible emblem. Thus, in the present instance, the *appearance*, the preternatural light or fire in the burning bush, we suppose to be what is truly and primarily meant by the *angel of the Lord;* but it is clear from the sequel that in and under this outward symbol there was present the divine personage who styles himself, v. 6, 'the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,' and who is also, v. 7, expressly called 'Jehovah' (Lord). This is still farther manifest from Deut. 33. 16, where Moses, in blessing the tribes in the name of the Lord, invokes upon Joseph 'the good will of him *that dwelt in the bush*.' Still farther confirmation of this view will be given as we proceed.——¶ *In a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.* This appeared to Moses a natural fire burning with great vehemence in the midst of the bush, yet we may suppose it to have been the supernatural fiery splendor which constituted the Shekinah, the symbol of the divine presence. The Hebrew word for 'bush,' (properly *bramble bush*) is סנה *seneh*, and from the 'bush' here mentioned, in connexion with the divine appearance, the Jewish writers, not improbably, suppose that this mountain and desert were afterwards called by the Israelites 'Mount *Sinai*,' and the 'wilderness of *Sinai*.' Thus in Pirke Eliezer, ch. 41, 'From the beginning of the world this Mount was called Horeb, and when God appeared unto Moses out of the midst of the bramble-bush, from the name of the bramble (Seneh) it was called Sinai.'—The incident which so much excited the wonder of Moses is generally supposed to have been designed as a representation of the condition of the Israelites in Egypt. 'The burning bush,' says Philo, 'was a symbol of the oppressed, and the flaming fire of the oppressors; that what was burning but not consumed, did portend that these who were afflicted by the violence of their enemies should not perish; and that the attempts of their enemies should be frustrated; and that the present troubles of the afflicted should have a good issue.' There they were oppressed and cruelly treated, bound down with bondage, and suffering every grievance that malice could devise and power effect to wear out their strength and diminish their numbers. They were in a furnace of fire, and in themselves but as briars and thorns compared with those that kindled it. But they were nevertheless not destroyed; nay, they were still flourishing; the nation continued to shoot forth vigorous branches, and a numerous offspring surrounded them in spite of their enemies. And whence this wonder, this apparent contradiction to the common

3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this [d] great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called [e] unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses! And he said, Here *am* I.

[d] Ps. 111. 2. Acts 7. 31.

[e] Deut. 33. 16.

course of nature? It was because God was in the midst of them. He, the imperishable and eternal God, who now appeared to Moses in the bush, burning but unburnt, and who afterwards walked with his three faithful servants in the burning fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, was continually with his oppressed people, and *therefore* they were not consumed. But farther, it will be no stretch of fancy if we consider the appearance of the bush as an emblem of the *present* condition of the children of Israel. They are at this day strangers in foreign lands. They have been in circumstances which, according to the common operation of merely human and political causes, would have long ago amalgamated them entirely with other nations, and made them vanish, as a people, from the earth. But they are at this day a distinct and separate people; they have survived the lapse of ages, which have swept away others far more numerous and powerful; they are scattered over the face of the whole earth; and yet their national character and name are preserved, and even their visages declare their origin. And why is this burning bush of the house of Israel yet unconsumed? It is because God is with them. He remembers his covenant with their fathers. He has further mercy in store for them. 'There shall yet come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' They shall again be grafted into their own olive-tree, for God is able to graft them in again, and his gifts and callings are without repentance. But again, this appearance may be considered as an apt emblem of the condition of even the spiritual church of Christ. Against himself and the cause of his gospel did 'the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together.' And ever since have the world and the devil been striving to crush his people, and to root out the memorial of them from the earth. Often have his witnesses prophesied in sackcloth, and often have his people suffered bonds and imprisonment and death for their religion. Yet it remains, and is still a light shining in a dark place. This is because that God is with his church God is in the midst of her, and therefore she is not moved. 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' She is built upon a rock and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Her great head has declared, 'Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world.' And herein consists the stability, perpetuity, and increase of the church.

3. *Why the bush is not consumed.* Heb. לֹא יִבְעַר *lo yibar, is not eaten up*; i. e. burnt up, entirely consumed, for that it was *apparently burning* we are expressly informed in v. 2. A fire in the Scriptures is frequently said to 'eat' as Lev. 6. 10, 'And take up the ashes which the fire hath *consumed*;' Heb. 'hath eaten,' Ps. 50. 3, 'Our God shall come and shall not keep silence: a fire shall *devour* before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.' It was matter of astonishment to Moses that this was not the effect in the present instance.

4. *When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, he called unto him*, &c. As if to reward the religious awe and

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: [f]put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground.

[f] ch. 19. 12. Josh. 5. 15. Acts 7. 33.

dread, and the sanctified curiosity, with which his spirit was touched. The phraseology shows that the term 'Lord' here is used interchangeably with 'Angel,' carrying with it the idea of something visible, or in other words of the Shekinah. God might have called to him without any such tokens of reverence on the part of Moses, but he does not see fit to make his communications to heedless minds. 'The desire of Moses to be taught,' says Calvin, 'as indicated by his drawing near, is especially worthy of note. It often happens that God meets us in vain because we perversely spurn so great a grace. Let us learn from the example of Moses, as often as God, by any sign, invites us to himself, sedulously to attend, nor stifle the offered light by our sluggishness.' The vouchsafement of visions of this nature was never intended to inspire a fruitless wonder or alarm in the minds of holy men. They were always subservient to some great moral end, and for the most part were attended with some express instructions in which the beholder was deeply concerned. It had now been a long time since any such personal intercourse with the Deity had been enjoyed by any of the chosen people. No instance of the kind is recorded as having taken place since God was pleased to speak to Jacob to encourage him to go down into Egypt; but now after a lapse of two hundred years God again condescends to appear and to converse with Moses, in order to encourage him to go back to the same country to bring his people out of it. We are ready to say that those favored men of old were happy in being permitted to enjoy such immediate intercourse with God; but happier are we who enjoy the full revelation of the precious gospel. Whatever they heard, they heard not the things which have come to our ears. Whatever were the promises given to them, we are in possession of better. Whatever the covenant made with the fathers, a better one has been established with us their spiritual descendants. Whatever the encouragement granted to them, we have still greater afforded to us in every part of the work which we have to do, in every trial and danger to which we may be exposed. Let us then hear the voice of God speaking to us in the gospel, where no phenomenon of fire intimidates our spirits. Let us hearken in faith to all its declarations, and yield implicit obedience to all its commands. ——¶ *Here am I.* A common expression indicative of readiness to hearken or obey. See Note on Gen. 22. 1.

5. *Draw not nigh hither.* That is, approach not any nearer than thou art. The scrutiny of mere curiosity was repelled; an undue familiarity was not permitted; a deep and awful reverence was enjoined. He was forbidden to approach too nigh unto God. The deepest awe which can possibly fill the soul is called for when a worm of the dust is admitted to stand within the precincts of the divine presence. We are indeed favored to live under a milder dispensation than was Moses, one under which we are not only bidden 'to draw nigh unto God,' but assured that 'he will draw nigh unto us.' We do not now draw nigh unto a burning bush or a flaming mount, but to a mercy seat to which we are commanded to come with filial boldness to obtain all needed grace. Yet even here there is nothing to warrant an unhallowed familiarity, nothing to abate the most profound reverence and godly fear when we enter

into the audience-chamber of the King of kings.——¶ *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet.* By *shoe* here is meant the leathern or wooden sole attached to the bottom of the foot by 'shoe-latchets' passing round the instep and ancle. See Note on Gen. 18. 4. Jerus. Targ. סנדלך *sandelok*, *thy sandal*. 'The reverence indicated by putting off the covering of the feet is still prevalent in the East. The Orientals throw off their slippers on all those occasions when we should take off our hats. They never uncover their heads, any more than we our feet. It would every where, whether among Christians, Moslems, or Pagans, be considered in the highest degree irreverent for a person to enter a church, a temple, or a mosque, with his feet covered; and we shall observe that the priests under the law officiated with bare feet. And not only is this form of showing respect exhibited in religious observances, but in the common intercourse of life. Few things inspire an Oriental with deeper disgust, than for a person to enter his room with shoes or boots on, regarding such conduct both as an insult to himself and a pollution to his apartment. These usages influence the costume of the head and feet. The former, being never uncovered, is in general shaven, and the head-dress generally is such that it could not be replaced without some degree of trouble; while for the feet they have loose and easy slippers, which may be thrown off and resumed with the least possible degree of inconvenience.' *Pict. Bib.*——¶ *The place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* Heb. אדמת קדש *admath kodesh*, *ground of holiness*; i. e. sanctified by the presence and manifestation of the Deity, who makes the heavens, the earth, the sanctuary, or whatever place it be in which his glory is revealed, to be accounted 'holy,' and therefore to be occupied with devout reverence by his worshippers. Accordingly the mount on which Christ was transfigured, 2 Pet. 1, 18. is called the 'holy mount.' A 'holiness' of this kind, founded solely upon divine appointment, and not upon the intrinsic nature of the subject, is termed 'relative' in contradistinction from 'positive,' or 'absolute,' and ceases when the occasion creating it ceases. The same direction was afterwards given to Joshua, the successor of Moses, on a somewhat similar occasion, Josh. 6. 15, 'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.' That is, it was made temporarily holy by the divine manifestation there witnessed. We are not indeed in the Scriptures taught the intrinsic holiness of places, but there is no doubt that the *spirit* of this command enjoins upon us a peculiar awe and reverence of feeling whenever we enter a house of worship, or any other place, where God is considered to be especially present. The impression that 'God is here' ought ever to have a solemnizing effect upon our minds, and repress every thing like carelessness, listlessness, or levity. Had we a proper sense of the divine majesty resting upon our spirits, would it be possible that we could give way to that profane heedlessness of mind which often steals upon us? Would one short hour's attendance betray us into slumber? Would a crowd of worldly or sensual thoughts intrude into our minds? Could the eye find leisure to roam over the assembly and upon the dress or deportment of others? Could a scornful or simpering countenance by significant smiles communicate its contemptuous or frivolous emotions to another? Assuredly not. God is as truly, though not as visibly, in the midst of his worshipping assemblies, as he was in the burning bush at Horeb, and our most appropriate sentiments on such occasions are those which would utter themselves in the reverential language of Jacob at Bethel, 'How dreadful is this place!'

6 Moreover he said, g I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid

g Gen. 28. 13. ver. 15. ch. 4. 5. Matt. 22. 32. Mark 12. 26. Luke 20. 37. Acts 7. 32.

6. *Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy father.* That is, of each one of thy fathers, even Abraham, and Isaac, &c. The term here is usually understood of Moses' immediate father, Amram, but it is with more probability to be considered as a collective singular, equivalent to 'fathers.' Accordingly it is rendered in Stephen's version of this event, Acts 7, 32, 'I am the God of thy *fathers*.' A like sense, we presume, is to be given to the expression, Ex. 15. 2, 'He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my *father's* God, and I will exalt him;' i. e. the God of my ancestors in general. We suppose the true import of the passage before us would be better expressed by the rendering; 'I am the God of thy fathers, (even) the God of Abraham, &c.' This is obviously confirmed by v. 15 of this chapter. While the Most High repressed presumption in Moses, and enjoined reverence, he encouraged him by reassuring him of that relation into which he had entered with the nation of Israel in the persons of their fathers. This declaration was made in order to assure Moses that even in the present oppressed state of his nation in Egypt, he had not forgotten them, or his relation to them as a God in covenant. This would be an unspeakable consolation to Moses, to find himself addressed by that God of whose appearances and promises to his fathers he had often heard, and to know that his heart was as kindly affected to him as it ever had been to his venerated ancestors. How comforting beyond measure to the Christian, in his more favored moments, to be assured that the God of all the good who have ever lived is *his* God, and equally pledged by his

his face; for h he was afraid to look upon God.

7 ¶ And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my peo-

h So 1 Kings 19. 13. Isai. 6. 1, 5. Neh. 9 9. Ps. 106. 44. Acts 7. 34.

covenant faithfulness, to show to *him* the same loving kindness that he showed to them!——¶ *Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.* Or rather perhaps, parenthetically, according to the Heb. accents, 'And Moses hid his face (because he was afraid) from looking upon God.' A more literal rendering of the last words (אל האלהים *el haelohim*) is *to* or *towards God*, or *towards the Elohim*, as the article is prefixed, which is not the common usage. It would seem that the term 'Elohim' here is intended to signify simply *that which was visible*, the outward symbol representing the essential Godhead, 'which no man hath seen nor can see.' The Chal. has correctly, 'He feared to look towards the Glory of God;' i. e. towards the overpowering brightness of the Shekinah, in which God manifested his presence. The effect described is what might have been anticipated. A consciously sinful creature may well fear and tremble when God comes to visit him, even though on a purpose of mercy. It is ignorance of God, not intimate communion with him, that begets an unhallowed familiarity. The angels, who know him best and adore him most profoundly, are most sensible of the infinite distance between him and them, and are therefore represented as 'covering their faces with their wings' when standing in his awful presence.

7. *I have surely seen the affliction,* &c. Heb. ראה ראיתי *raoh raithi, seeing I have seen*, i. e. have intently considered. Arab. 'Have regarded.' Thus Ps. 106. 44, 'Nevertheless he *regarded* their affliction when he heard their cry.' Heb. 'He *saw* (וירא) their affliction.'——¶ *By reason of their task-masters.*

ple which *are* in Egypt, and [i] have heard their cry [k] by reason of their taskmasters; for [l] I know their sorrows:

[i] ch. 2. 23, 24. [k] ch. 1. 11. [l] Gen. 18. 21. ch. 2. 25.

Heb. נגשיו *nogesauv, his task-masters;* the whole people spoken of as one man, according to common usage. The original for *task-masters*, though of equivalent import, is not the same word with that so rendered, ch. 1. 11, but properly signifies *exacters*, translated in Job, 39. 7, *driver*, and in Zech. 9. 8, *oppressor*. The Gr. has εργοδιωκται, *workmasters*, and the Chal. 'Those who cause them to serve.'——¶ *I know their sorrows.* Heb. מכאוביו *makobauv, his sorrows*, collect. sing. as before. For the import of 'know,' see Note on Ex. 1. 8. Hos. 13. 5, presents a parallel phraseology, 'I did *know* thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought;' i. e. I compassionately knew thee; I knew thee so as to succor thee.

8. *I am come down to deliver them.* Heb. לְהַצִּילוֹ *lehatzilo, to deliver him*, collect. sing. In strict propriety of speech neither ascent nor descent can be predicated of the Omnipresent Being, but in adaptation to our modes of conceiving of the divine acts, God is said to 'come down' when he puts forth in the sight of men such striking exhibitions of his power, either for grace or judgment, as shall constitute an indubitable token of his special presence. It may be remarked, moreover, that whenever the Most High is said, in the sacred volume, to 'descend,' some signal event of his providence is uniformly represented as following. Thus, when he is said to have resolved to 'go down' and see the sins of Sodom, the fearful overthrow of their city quickly ensued; when he 'came down' to thwart the building of Babel, the confusion of tongues followed, as it were, upon his footsteps; and when, in the narrative before us, he announces his purpose of descending in behalf of

8 And [m] I am come down to [n] deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, [o] unto a good land,

[m] Gen 11. 5, 7. & 18. 21. & 50. 24. [n] ch. 6. 6, 8. & 12. 51. [o] Deut. 1. 25. & 8. 7, 8, 9.

his people, their miraculous deliverance, with deserved vengeance upon Egypt, is the memorable result.——¶ *Unto a good land and a large.* Not indeed a land very large in itself, but large in comparison with their territory in Goshen, and of sufficient extent to contain with ease all the population of that race which was destined to inherit it. ——¶ *Unto a land flowing with milk and honey.* An abundance of milk and honey indicates a country rich in pasturage and flowers, of which the one is evinced by the teeming udders of the flocks and herds, and the other by large quantities of wild or cultivated honey. That this description held literally good of the land of promise, there is the most unquestionable evidence, not only from the declarations of Scripture, Deut. 8. 8. 32. 13. Judg. 14. 8. 1 Sam. 14. 25, 26. Ps. 81. 17, but even from what we know in modern times of the soil, climate, and productions of Palestine. But if this should be thought too rigid an interpretation of the words, 'milk' may be understood to denote all kinds of *necessary food*, and 'honey,' whatever is peculiarly *agreeable to the palate*, so that this expression, so often applied to the land of Canaan, may be simply intended to characterise *a very fruitful and pleasant country*, abounding in all the products necessary to the *subsistence of life*, and rich in the dainties which minister to *the gratification of the taste*. See the emphatic commendation of the soil, productions, &c. of the promised land, Deut. 8. 7—9. The same proverbial expression of plenty is familiar to the classic writers. Thus Euripides, Bac. v. 142, 'The field flows with milk, with wine, and with the nectar of bees.' The enemies of reve-

and a large, unto a land p flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of q the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perrizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

p ver. 17. ch. 13. 5. & 33. 3. Numb. 13. 27. Deut. 26. 9, 15. Jer. 11. 5. & 32. 22. Ezek. 20 6. q Gen. 15. 18.

9 Now therefore, behold, r the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the s oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10 t Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that

r ch. 2. 23. s ch. 1. 11, 13, 14 22. t Ps. 105. 26. Micah. 6. 4.

lation have drawn arguments from the present neglected state of some parts of Palestine, to invalidate the statements of the sacred historians, who represent it as one of the most delightful spots upon the face of the earth. In this, however, they have not only utterly failed, but by drawing the attention of modern travellers on the subject, have unwittingly contributed towards the illustration and confirmation of the sacred records. The land has, indeed, suffered under the blighting dominion of the Saracens, Turks, and Egyptians; agriculture has been neglected; and an air of desolation has crept over its once luxuriant hills and dales, but the traces of its original fertility and beauty are far from being wholly obliterated. We may infer, from the following passages from the pens of eminent travellers, what Palestine was in a state of prosperity. 'We left the road,' says D'Arvieux, 'to avoid the Arabs, whom it is always disagreeable to meet with, and reached by a side path the summit of a mountain, where we found a beautiful plain. It must be confessed, that if we could live secure in this country, it would be the most agreeable residence in the world, partly on account of the pleasing diversity of mountains and valleys, partly on account of the salubrious air which we breathe there, and which is at all times filled with balsamic odors from the wild flowers of these valleys, and from the aromatic herbs on the hills.' Dr. E. D. Clarke, speaking of the appearance of the country between Sychem and Jerusalem, says, 'A sight of this territory alone, can convey any adequate idea of its surprising produce: it is truly the Eden of the East, rejoicing in the abundance of its wealth. The effect of this upon the people was strikingly portrayed in every countenance. Under a wise and beneficent government, the produce of the Holy Land would exceed all calculation. Its perennial harvests; the salubrity of its air; its limpid springs; its rivers, lakes, and matchless plains; its hills and valleys; all these, added to the serenity of the climate, prove this land to be indeed 'a field which the Lord hath blessed: God hath given it of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine!'——¶ *Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites*, &c. All singular in the original, *Canaanite, Hittite*, &c., and so in innumerable other instances.

9. *Now therefore behold the cry*, &c. The Most High repeats this declaration from v. 7, in order to give stronger assurance to Moses that he will be with him and not suffer him to go upon a fruitless embassy. His truth, his justice, his mercy were all concerned in the liberation of his people. Such cruelties as they had suffered at the hands of the Egyptians would have awaked his vindictive providence in behalf of *any* people, and armed it against their oppressors. How much more when the sufferers were *his own* chosen people, whom he had taken under his special covenant care, whom he had sworn to protect, to befriend, to bless.

10. *Come now therefore*, &c. Heb. ועתה לכה *ve-attah lekah, and now go* The secret impulse under which Moses

thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

11 ¶ And Moses said unto God, [u] Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

[u] See ch. 6 12. 1 Sam. 18. 18. Isai. 6. 5. 8. Jer. 1. 6.

had formerly acted, in his incipient essays towards the deliverance of his people, ch. 2. 11, now becomes an open call and a full commission; and he whom the Israelites, Acts, 7. 35, 'refused saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.' The divine Speaker here passes from promises and assurances to commands. Moses is now required to address himself to the work which God had destined him to perform. He dealt kindly with his servant in thus strengthening and animating him with these precious hopes of success. Nothing could have been laid to his charge had he waved all such preliminary encouragements, and sternly bid him go forward without any intimations as to the result of his mission. But our merciful God deals more graciously with human infirmity. He excites a more prompt and cheerful obedience by assuring his servants of a happy issue to all the work in which they engage for him. He thus leaves our perverse and selfish and refractory hearts utterly without excuse, if we decline his service.

11. *And Moses said unto God, Who am I*, &c. Calling to mind the lively interest which Moses had formerly evinced in behalf of his people, and the ready zeal with which he had entered upon the redress of their wrongs, we should no doubt at first suppose that his inmost heart would have responded to the divine call, and that he would have discovered an almost eager promptitude to enter upon so congenial a service. But no; he is appalled by the appointment. He cannot believe himself equal to it, or worthy of it. Forty years before, in the ardor of comparative youth, he had made such an attempt, and failed. He shrinks back therefore from it now. But we are not to suppose that it was altogether from the recollection of the past that he declined the present service. He was in many respects a different man now from what he was then. He had long been leading a retired, quiet, and contemplative life, and had gained a deeper knowledge of God and of himself. He had greater experience of the dispositions and motives of men, and had grown in humility and a diffidence of his own powers. He could better estimate the magnitude and difficulty of the work. He could better understand the weight of opposition which would arise from a powerful king and a mighty nation; and he might also well expect to have again to encounter fear or unwillingness in his own people. Now also he would feel that he could have no protection or favor from Pharaoh's daughter, and obscure as he was in Midian, he looked upon himself as altogether insufficient and incompetent for so great an undertaking. That his backwardness was excusable no one will affirm, yet it is probably no more than justice to Moses to say, that his reply did not flow from a positively disobedient spirit, like that which prompted Jonah to flee from the presence of the Lord, but from a profoundly humble sense of his own unworthiness and incompetence for such an arduous trust. From a similar consciousness Isaiah shrunk from the duty to which he was called of being the Lord's messenger, saying, 'I am a man of unclean lips;' and Jeremiah was led to exclaim 'Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak

12 And he said, [x] Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

[x] Gen. 31. 3. Deut. 31. 23. Josh. 1. 5. Rom. 8. 31.

for I am a child.' Paul also was actuated by the same feeling when he anxiously enquired, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' A due degree of distrust in ourselves is no doubt always proper, but we should not forget, that as there is a sinful pride which urges men to seek stations and employments to which they have no just pretensions, so there is a sinful humility which shrinks from the call of God, and which under the guise of self denial, or the affectation of under-valuing and debasing our own persons and qualities, indirectly charges God with foolishness in choosing instruments unsuited to his work. Let us ever aim then to observe a happy medium between self-complacency and self-disparagement. As it is God's prerogative to send by whom he will send, so he will never fail to qualify his emissaries for the errand on which he dispatches them. His commission is sufficient to empower the weakest man for the most arduous service.

12. *And he said, Certainly I will be with thee.* Chal. 'My Word shall be for thy help.' It no doubt for the most part holds true, that those who are in reality the best fitted for the peculiar work of God are usually prone to esteem themselves the least so; yet the promised presence of Jehovah is sufficient to silence every plea which would prevent the humble-minded from going forward in any prescribed deliverance, reformation, or change in the church or the world. No other than this simple consideration is afforded in order to remove the misgivings of Moses. It was of no consequence who he was, or what he could do, as long as Omnipotence led the way before him. We render the highest honor to God when relying on his proffered aid, we seek no ground of confidence out of himself, when in the deep sense of our own impotence we count it enough that he is with us and for us.——¶ *This* shall be *a token unto thee that I have sent thee.* Heb. זה לך האות *zeh leka haoth, this shall be to thee a sign.* These words are understood by most of the Rabbinical commentators to refer to the supernatural appearance which Moses was now called to witness in the burning bush. According to this mode of interpretation there is a two-fold assurance conveyed to him in the two several clauses of this verse; first, that God would be with him, and protect him in his embassy to Pharaoh. Of this fact he might regard the spectacle before him as a sign or token; for as he saw the burning bush subservient to the divine pleasure without being consumed, so he might be confident of being enabled to execute the commission assigned to him without personal harm. Secondly that when this was accomplished, when he had delivered his message to Pharaoh, and brought out the people from Egypt, then both he and all the host of Israel should serve God, by oblations of sacrifice and praise, upon that very mountain where he now stood. The mass of modern interpreters, however, understand the token here spoken of, to refer, not to the vision of the divine glory in the burning bush, but to the *actual future result* of the mission now devolved upon Moses: the *sign* promised was no other than the *event itself*, which was predicted; q. d. 'Go now and try, and you shall find, *by the event*, that I have sent you.' Of these interpretations the former is more agreeable to the Hebrew accents, which indicate a marked distinction between the former and the latter clauses of the verse; and it seems

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the chil-

also better to accord with our ordinary conceptions of the use of a sign, which is understood to be something addressed to the *outward senses* rather than to the *faith* of the recipient, and is of course naturally regarded rather as a cause, help, or confirmation of faith, than its *object*. The latter view of the passage, however, it must be admitted, is strongly corroborated by Isaiah, 7. 14. 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.' Here both the sign and the thing promised are future. But, the point is one which after all we must leave undecided.

13. *Behold, when I come*, &c. The diffidence of Moses is not yet overcome. Still doubting and irresolute, he ventures to urge another difficulty in the words of this verse. He supposes that his own people will rigidly interrogate him by way of sifting the authority under which he acts, and will particularly require of him an account of the *nature*, *character*, and *attributes* of the Being whose commission he bore. This is undoubtedly the true sense of the term *name* in this connexion. It is not so much the *common title* by which he was known that they would wish to learn—for it is supposed by the wording of the text that he would announce him as 'the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob'—as the *new* and *significant denomination*, which he might be expected to assume on this occasion. The people were well aware by tradition that whenever God had been pleased to honor any of their ancestors with a new revelation, it was his wont, in order to give it greater weight, to assume a new characteristic denomination, expressive mainly of that attribute which served as a security for the fulfilment of the promise. Thus when he appeared to Abraham, Gen. 17. 1, and promised him a son in his old age, he announced himself as *El Shaddai, God Almighty*, infinitely *able* to accomplish all his purposes. So also we find the occasional titles *Most High, Ancient of Days, Jah*, &c. In like manner, Moses took it for granted that on an occasion so momentous as the present, they would expect the announcement of some new and appropriate name, which should carry in its import a kind of pledge for the performance of all that he was pleased to promise.

14. *God said unto Moses, I am that I am.* Heb. אהיה אשר אהיה *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, literally, *I will be that I will be.* The Gr. resolves it, *εγω ειμι ὁ ων, I am he that is, or the Existing One.* Arab. 'The Eternal who passeth not away.' A somewhat similar denomination occurs, Rev. 1. 4, where John invokes grace and peace 'from Him which is and which was, and which is to come,' which is supposed to be a paraphrase or exposition of the name יהוה *Yehovah*, a word derived from the same root היה *hayah*, and of kindred import with the phrase before us. See Note on Ex. 6. 3. The title, 'I am that I am,' properly denotes the underived, eternal, and unchangeable existence of the great Being to whom it is applied, carrying in it also the implication that He, in distinction from all others, is the one only true God, the God who really *is*, while all the pretended deities of the Egyptians and other nations were *a vanity, a nonentity, a lie.* It implies, moreover, as founded upon the immutability of the Divine nature, the certain and

dren of Israel, [y]I AM hath sent me unto you.

15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* [z]my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

[y] ch. 6. 3. John 8. 58. 2 Cor. 1. 20. Hebr. 13 8. Rev. 1. 4.

[z] Ps. 135. 13. Hos. 12. 5.

faithful performance of every promise which he had uttered, so that whatever he had bound himself by covenant to do for Abraham, for Isaac, and for Jacob, he pledges himself by the annunciation of this august title to make the same good to their seed. 'I am that (which) I will be, and I will be that (which) I am; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' We see then the purport of the passage. 'If they shall ask, what is he? by what name is he known? what are the nature and attributes of him who, as thou sayest, has sent thee to bring us out of Egypt? tell them that thou art commissioned by him who describes his own nature by saying I AM THAT I AM; I am the eternal, self-existent, and immutable Being; the only being who can say, that he always will be what he always has been.'

——¶ I AM *hath sent me unto you.* Heb. אהיה *ehyeh, I will be*; a proper *future*, but having the force of the *continuous present*. The first person of the verb of existence is here used as a noun substantive, and made the nominative to another verb in the third person. This is indeed a striking grammatical anomaly, but it arises out of the nature of the subject. When God speaks of himself it is no matter of wonder that he should disregard all grammatical rules, for adequate expressions come not within the compass of any language or any possible form of speech. The Targ. of Jonathan thus feebly halts towards a fitting phraseology, 'The That-was and Hereafter-will-be hath sent me unto you.' And here we cannot but be reminded of the remarkable words of our Savior, John, 8. 58, 'Before Abraham was, *I am*.' The expression is so strikingly parallel, that we know not how to resist the conclusion that there was a real though mysterious identity in the essential nature of the two speakers, so that whatever was meant by Jehovah in saying to Moses, 'I am hath sent me to you,' the same was meant by the saying of Jesus, 'Before Abraham was, I am.' And thus the Jews would appear to have understood it, for they immediately took up stones to cast at him, as being guilty of the highest blasphemy in thus appropriating to himself the incommunicable name of God.

15. *This is my memorial unto all generations.* Heb. זכרי *zikri*. The name or character by which I will be remembered, celebrated, and invoked in all time to come. Accordingly, in allusion to this declaration, we have Hos. 12. 5, 'Even the Lord (Jehovah) God of Hosts; the Lord (Jehovah) is his *memorial*.' Ps. 135, 'Thy name, O Lord, (Jehovah,) endureth for ever; and thy *memorial*, O Lord, (Jehovah,) unto all generations.' The words were evidently adapted, as they were doubtless intended, to bring the chosen people to a devout recognition of God as emphatically and pre-eminently the God of their race, and to wake up to more lively actings that faith which had become dormant under the pressure of long continued affliction. Their protracted bondage, though it had not utterly extinguished the light of the great truth respecting the divine Being and his perfections, yet had no doubt very much obscured it. They had lost the practical sense of their covenant rela-

16 Go, and [a] gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying,

[a] ch. 4. 29.

[b] I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt:

17 And I have said, [c] I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt,

[b] Gen. 50. 24. ch. 2. 25. & [c] Luke 1. 6. Gen. 15. 14, 16. ver. 8.

tion to Jehovah, and yet as this was the only true spring of all active faith, hope, and obedience, it was important that they should be freshly instructed on this head, and taught continually to speak of and to trust in God as the God of their fathers, who would never be unfaithful to his engagements. Moses, therefore, by reminding them of this endearing title of the Most High, would be in fact furnishing them with a constant memorial of their own mercies.

16. *Gather the elders of Israel together.* Gr. *την γερουσιαν των υιων Ισραηλ, the senate or eldership of the children of Israel;* not so much *all* the aged men of the congregation of Israel, as the *elders in office*, the persons of principal note and influence in the tribes, teachers and rulers; men who were qualified by age, experience, and wisdom, to preside over the affairs of the nation, and who it appears were usually employed as organs of communication between Moses and the body of the people. Thus when Moses and Aaron are said, ch. 12. 3, to have been commanded 'to speak unto *all the congregation of Israel*, saying,' &c. we find that in the account of the execution of this order, v. 21, 'Moses called for *all the elders of Israel*, and said unto them,' &c. See Note on Gen. 24. 2—4. As the distinction of tribes was undoubtedly kept up among the Israelites in Egypt, and as it is clear from Num. 2, and elsewhere, that each of the tribes had one or more presiding or ruling chiefs called elders, who formed collectively, at least in after times, the great counsel of the nation, it was to these individuals, as the natural heads and representatives of the rest, that Moses in the first instance was commanded to go, and summon them together to a general assembly, when he would announce to them the fact and the object of his mission. The release of Israel was to be demanded of the king in the general name of the whole people, and this required the consent and concurrence of the entire body of their rulers, the proper organs of the national voice. When *they* were informed of the fact and convinced of the reality of Moses' mission, they would of course exert all their influence in preparing the people for the crisis before them.——¶ *I have surely visited you and* seen, &c. Heb. פקד פקדתי *pakod pakadti, visiting I have visited.* That is, I have so absolutely purposed and decreed to deliver you from Egypt, that it may be said to be already done. Although the word 'seen' is supplied in our version, it is not indispensably necessary to complete the sense, as the import of the preceding verb includes the idea of *judicial* or *penal visitation*, as well as *merciful.* To *visit the doings* of any one is plainly to *punish* them. The phrase therefore expresssively conveys the assurance of visiting the Israelites *in mercy* and their oppressors *in judgment.*

17. *And I have said I will bring*, &c. That is, I have resolved. See Note on Gen. 1. 3. The term 'affliction' here will appear very appropriate upon comparing this with the original promise given to Abraham, Gen. 15. 13, 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall *afflict* them four hundred years.' From this *affliction* they were now to be delivered,

unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

18 And [d] they shall hearken to thy voice; and [e] thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath [f] met with us; and now let us go (we beseech thee) three day's journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

19 ¶ And I am sure that the king of Egypt [g] will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

[d] ch. 4. 31. [e] ch. 5. 1, 3.

[f] Numb. 23. 3, 4, 15, 16. [g] ch. 5. 2. & 7. 4.

and in order to stimulate their minds with the incentive of hope, the Most High recites a list of nations of whose territories they were to come into possession, and lest moreover they should be discouraged by the recollection that several of the patriarchs had been formerly driven out of that land by famine, he gives them adequate assurance on that head by telling them that it is 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'

18. *And they shall hearken to thy voice.* That is, shall believingly and obediently hearken. See Note on Gen. 16. 2. This assurance on the part of God was peculiarly seasonable and precious. The Israelites had been so long depressed and dispirited by their bondage, that they would naturally be slow to entertain any thoughts of deliverance, and a cordial willingness to use the means, encounter the difficulties, and face the dangers requisite for that purpose, could only be effected by a powerful divine influence on their hearts; and that influence God here engages to put forth. Such an assurance is the grand encouragement of all good men engaged in declaring useful and saving truths or commanding laborious duties to their fellow men. Their best words will be unregarded, their utmost efforts will fail, unless the Lord himself infuse a vital efficacy into them, and give the hearing ear and the yielding heart to their auditors.——¶ *The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us.* Heb. נקרה *nikrah, has been made to occur.* The allusion is plainly to the *visible* token of the divine presence which had been manifested, and they say 'hath met with *us*,' though Moses alone had witnessed it, from his constructive identity, as leader, with the people, and from its having been vouchsafed for their benefit as well as his. The Gr. and the Vulg. both render, 'hath called us.'——¶ *Let us go three days' journey into the wilderness,* &c. Neither Moses nor he in whose name he spoke, can be justly charged with falsehood or prevarication in uttering this language. The utmost that can be alleged is, that he did not tell the *whole* truth, and this it cannot be shown that he was bound to do. See on this subject the Note on Gen. 12. 13. The command to make this request of Pharaoh shows, that it may sometimes be the way of true wisdom to seek that as a favor, which may at the same time be claimed as a right.

19. *I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go.* Heb. לא ירתן אתכם להלך *lo yitten ethkem lahalok, will not give you to go.* See Note on Gen. 20. 6. God announces beforehand that their first application will be unavailing, in order that they may not be disheartened by the repulse, and give up the enterprise as hopeless. Let it not be thought, however, derogatory to the divine glory thus to send men advisedly upon a bootless errand; for the result would tend far more strikingly to illustrate the equity of the subsequent proceedings of providence in extorting, with tremendous judgments, that which had been unjustly

20 And I will [h]stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with [i]all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and [k]after that he will let you go.

21 And [l]I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians;

[h] ch. 6. 6. & 7. 5. & 9. 15. [i] ch. 7. 3. & 11. 9. Deut. 6. 22. Neh. 9. 10. Ps. 105. 27. & 135. 9. Jer. 32. 20. Acts 7. 36. See ch. 7. to ch. 13. [k] ch. 12. 31. [l] ch. 11. 3. & 12. 36. Ps. 106. 46. Prov. 16. 7.

and impiously withheld. As the request was in itself simple and reasonable, his refusal to comply with it would disclose his real character, and show how truly he and his people deserved all the wrath that they were afterwards made to feel. ——¶ *No, not by a mighty hand.* That is, he will at first resist and rebel, notwithstanding all the demonstrations of my great power against him; but at length he shall yield, as is declared in the next verse. Or it may be rendered, with the Gr. and Vulg. 'Unless by a strong hand.'

20. *And I will stretch out mine hand,* &c. Heb. ושלחתי *veshalahti, and I will send out.* Chal. 'And I will send the stroke of my strength.' The connective particle ו *and* may as properly here be rendered *but* or *therefore;* as if the design were to point to the *opposition* which God was to make to Pharaoh's resistance; or to indicate the *reason* of his stretching forth his hand; 'Therefore will I stretch forth my hand, because Pharaoh will not yield to my demand without it. I will see whose hand is the stronger, his or mine.'

21. *I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.* Here again we perceive that God has his eye upon the ancient promise, Gen. 15. 14, 'And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out *with great substance.*' He allures his people by an accumulation of promises, that they may engage in the work before them with more alacrity and vigor. He not only assures them of liberty, but of riches. But this could be accomplished only by turning the hostile hearts of the Egyptians to a posture of clemency and generosity, and this he engages to do. The words, however, 'I will give this people favor,' are not to be understood as intimating that he would *conciliate towards them the affection* of their enemies. Undoubtedly the reverse of this was the case, particularly at the time when the promised favor was shown them; for they were then trembling for their lives under the repeated inflictions of the plagues; but the meaning is, that God would so overrule their dispositions towards his people that they should bestow upon them *marked expressions of favor,* they should be induced to *treat them as if they loved them,* though in reality they hated them as the procuring cause of all their troubles. Such an absolute control over the fiercest spirits of the enemies of his church shows that when God allows them to rage it is for the wisest purposes of discipline to his people. As he *could* soften them in a moment, if he does not do so, it is because he sees it better that license should be afforded them for a season.

and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:

22 [m]But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put *them* upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and [n]ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

[m] Gen. 15. 14. ch. 11. 2. & 12. 35, 36. [n] Job 27. 17. Prov. 13. 22. Ezek. 39. 10.

22. *Every woman shall borrow of her neighbor,* &c. Heb. שאלה *shaalah, shall ask.* For a somewhat extended view of the moral character of this transaction see Note on Ex. 12. 35. We shall there see that when God commanded the Israelites to possess them-

CHAPTER IV.

AND Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

selves of the jewels and raiment of their enemies, and to 'spoil' them, they did not take them by rapine and stealth, but as *spoils* voluntarily given up to them by the Egyptians; in a word, that there is no ground in the import of the original for accusing the Israelites of fraud or injustice. Without anticipating the fuller canvassing the subject which we there propose, we may here remark, that the term 'borrow' has been somewhat unhappily adopted in our translation, as it implies a *promise of return*. But this is not the sense of the original שׁאל *shaal*. This signifies *to ask, demand, petition, request*, and is the very word employed Ps. 2. 8, 'Ask (שׁאל *sheal*) of me the heathen for thine inheritance,' &c.; although in two passages, Ex. 22. 14, and 2 Kings, 6. 5, it cannot perhaps be doubted that its import is that of *borrowing*. But for *borrow* in the more strict and genuine sense of the word, the Heb. has entirely another term לוה *lavah*, which occurs among other places, Deut. 28. 12, 'Thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not *borrow* (תלוה *hilvitha*).' Neh. 5. 4, 'There were also that said, We have *borrowed* (לוינו *lavinu*) money for the king's tribute.' Prov. 22. 7, 'The *borrower* (מלוה *malveh*) is servant to the lender.' Is. 24. 2, 'And it shall be, as with the lender, so with the *borrower* (מלוה *malveh*).'——¶ *Of her that sojourneth in her house.* Heb. מגרת בּיתה *miggarath bethah*. Gr. *συσκηνου αυτης, her fellow-dweller*. Chal. 'From her who is a near neighbor to her house.' But this is not an exact rendering of the Heb. nor does it differ sufficiently from the preceding term. The original properly signifies *an indweller*, as in Job, 19. 15, '*They that dwell in mine house* (גרי בּיתי *garë bithi*), and my maids count me for a stranger.' The implication would seem to be, that the Egyptians in some cases occupied tenements which belonged to the Israelites, or at any rate that they lived very closely intermingled together, a circumstance which gave them a better opportunity to despoil their oppressors of their effects.——¶ *Jewels of silver and jewels of gold.* Heb. כּלי *kelë*. The present rendering no doubt restricts too much the meaning of the original, which properly includes *vessels, implements, utensils*, of any kind made of gold or silver. The term is here equivalent to *valuable effects*. These they were to 'put upon their sons and upon their daughters,' by which would naturally be understood from our translation, that they were to put them upon their children *as ornaments*. But would the sons wear female ornaments? A much more probable supposition is, that they were to *lay* them upon the young people *as a burden to be carried*. If the original term meant nothing but *jewels*, the former interpretation would no doubt be entirely plausible. But we have seen that it includes every kind of gold and silver articles. They were therefore put upon their sons and daughters, not to be *worn*, but to be *carried*.

CHAPTER IV.

1. *Moses answered and said, But behold, they will not believe me.* Heb. והן *ve-hen, and behold*. The Gr. we incline to believe has the most correct rendering *εαν, if*, making it a *hypothetical* instead of an *absolute* affirmation of Moses. Thus too the Arab, 'Perhaps they will not believe me.' The original term is expressly so rendered, Jer. 3. 1, 'They say *if* (הן *hen*) a man put away his wife, and she go from him,' &c. It cannot indeed be questioned

2 And the LORD said unto him, What *is* that in thy hand? And he said, [a] A rod.

[a] ver. 17. 20.

3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

that Moses was reluctant to be employed on the embassy to Pharaoh and intended in these words to urge an objection, but the phraseology appears to present it in a *conditional* form. Otherwise, it may be asked, on what authority did he make the assertion? How did he know that the elders would not believe him, when God had expressly assured him, ch. 3. 18, that they would? Would he adventure upon such a pointed contradiction of the words of Jehovah?

2. *What is that in thine hand?* The drift of this question is simply to wake up and direct Moses' attention to the miracle about to be wrought. It is as if he had said, 'Take particular notice, and see that there is no illusion in the matter. Be sure that what you see is really what you take it to be.' When God questions his creatures it is not for the sake of *learning*, but of *teaching*. ——¶ *And he said, a rod.* Heb. מטה *matteh*, *a rod*, or *staff*, as it is rendered Gen. 38. 18; i. e. such a rod or crook as is used by shepherds in tending their flocks. Thus Mic. 7. 14, 'Feed thy people *with thy rod* the flock of thine heritage.' In v. 20, it is called the 'rod of God' from the miraculous effects which it was instrumental in working. Comp. v. 20.

3. *And it became a serpent.* Heb. רחר לנחש *yehi lenahash*, *it became to a serpent*. It will probably answer all the demands of the text to consider this as simply a miraculous sign intended to authenticate the mission of Moses. We are not required to seek or assign a reason why this particular sign was adopted rather than any other, yet we may without extravagance suppose that there *was* some intrinsic adaptedness in the sign selected to the purpose of its exhibition. In what this consisted it may not be easy confidently to affirm. Calvin suggests with great plausibility, that the drift of it was to intimate the formidableness of Moses to Pharaoh, notwithstanding his comparatively abject and despised condition. The staff was the ensign of the shepherd's calling, and what to human view more contemptible than a rustic keeper of sheep coming forth from the desert, where he had been accustomed to encounter only wild beasts of prey, and oppose his simple crook to the sceptre of a powerful king? Would not this be a very significant mode of teaching that however destitute of human means of intimidation, the shepherd of Midian should notwithstanding be rendered dreadful to a throned oppressor, when the rude staff that he carried in his hand should be a more destructive instrument than a thousand swords? His own affrightment on the occasion would tend to give him a deeper sense of the hidden power of that terror which Omnipotence could strike into the inmost spirit of his adversary, and he could not but infer that there was no need of numerous forces or great preparations when he carried in his hand an implement the bare sight of which was able to smite the monarch with consternation. It may be proper, however, to observe that the Jewish commentators are disposed to consider the serpent as representing Pharaoh rather than Moses. As the original נחש *nahash*, as remarked on Gen. 3. 1, is occasionally interchanged with תנין *tannin*, *dragon*, the very word in fact which occurs Ex. 7. 10, 'And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a *serpent* (תנין *tannin*),' and as Pharaoh, king of

4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:

5 That they may [b] believe that [c] the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

6 ¶ And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous [d] as snow.

[b] ch. 19. 9. [c] ch. 3. 15. [d] Numb. 12. 10. 2 Kings 5. 27.

Egypt, is termed, Ezek. 29. 3, 'The great *dragon* (תַּנִּים *tannim*) that lieth in the midst of his rivers,' they suggest that the rod converted into this reptile-monster, (perhaps the *crocodile*, as Lightfoot believes), was designed to represent Pharaoh in all the terrors of his cruelty and oppression; while on the other hand his being seized by the hand of Moses, and converted into an innocuous rod, indicated the ease with which, under the mighty working of God, he should be subdued, despoiled of his power to harm, and even brought to confess himself to be at the mercy of Moses, as a rod is wielded by the hand of its possessor. Thus, Ehezer, a Jewish commentator: 'As the serpent biteth and killeth the sons of Adam, so Pharaoh and his people did bite and kill the Israelites; but he was turned and made like a dry stick.'

5. *That they may believe*, &c. The sentence is apparently imperfect, requiring some such preliminary clause, as 'Do this, that they may believe, &c.' For a similar omission, and the manner in which it is to be supplied, compare Mark, 14. 49, 'I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the Scriptures must be fulfilled,' with Matt. 26. 55, 56, 'I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. *But all this was done*, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.' The miracle was not only exhibited on this occasion to Moses, but the power conferred upon him of working it himself, both for the purpose of acquiring credence among the Israelites, and of overawing the obstinacy of Pharaoh. The incident goes evidently on the ground that miracles are a certain and satisfactory proof of the divinity of the mission and doctrine of a prophet. They constitute the proper credentials of one sent of God. They are a divine testimony both to the commission of the messenger and to the truth of the message. The principle on which miracles are wrought is clearly and distinctly recognised in the words of the woman of Sarepta to the prophet who had raised her son to life, 1 Kings, 17. 24, 'Now by this I know thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord by thy mouth is truth.' This is the language of nature and of common sense.

6. *Put now thine hand into thy bosom*, &c. That is, into the open part of the tunic, a long outer robe, above the girdle. The drift of this second sign was similar to that of the first, for with these miraculous voices 'God speaketh once, yea twice,' though it is too often the case that 'man regardeth it not.' As far as the intrinsic significancy of the sign is concerned, it was evidently calculated to teach that whatever is now vigorous, vital, and flourishing may at once be withered at the nod of Omnipotence; and again with equal facility restored to its pristine condition. The effect of a leprosy was to banish the subject of it from the abodes of men to solitary seclusion. As far as the miracle had relation to the person of Moses, an emblematic leprosy was upon him when he went out as a shunned and

7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom, and behold, [e] it was turned again as his *other* flesh.

8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy

[e] Deut. 32. 39 Numb. 12. 13, 14. 2 Kings 5. 14. Matt. 8. 3.

hated fugitive from the palace of Pharaoh, and led his flock over the rough, sandy, and arid places of the Midian desert, and among sapless thorns and thickets. After passing forty years in this desolate state, cast out as a withered branch, without name, without repute, without power, he suddenly recovers all he had lost, and comes forth as a messenger of God, clothed in all the honors of a divine commission. With a slight modification, the same sign may be considered as shadowing forth the contrast between the condition of the Israelites, wasted and worn out in their bondage, and the state of prosperity and glory to which they were about to be raised as the elect people of Heaven. This view is sufficient to show the pertinency of the sign, without requiring us to fix upon any more recondite import. It was plainly adapted to teach the general salutary lesson, that every thing human stands or falls, flourishes or fades, according to the good pleasure of God; that it is his prerogative to weaken and abase the stout, the hardy, the lofty, and his to restore the decayed and fallen to life, activity, and vigor.——¶ *Leprous as snow.* As snow is not leprous, reference must be intended to the color of the flesh. Accordingly the Chal. has correctly, 'As white as snow.' This was the worst kind of leprosy, in which the body not only assumes the hue of dead and bloodless flesh, but becomes covered with white scales, attended with a most tormenting itch.

8. *If they will not hearken to the voice of the first sign.* That is, to the import, meaning, drift, of the first sign. See Note upon the sense of the word 'voice,' Gen. 21. 17. The sign is said to have a 'voice,' because it speaks that to the eye which words do to the ear. On the contrary, that which is addressed to the ear is sometimes represented as if exhibited to the eye; thus Gal. 3. 1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you;' i. e. who have heard this fact declared in the preaching of the gospel. The Psalmist probably alludes to the phraseology of the text, Ps. 105. 27, 'They showed his signs among them.' Heb. 'They showed the *words* of his signs.' They were words spoken to the ear of reason, if not of sense.——¶ *They will believe the voice of the latter sign.* This is not perhaps to be understood as a positive affirmation, for the next verse intimates the possibility that they may require still farther evidence. The words appear designed to express the *intrinsic adaptedness* of the signs to produce belief, or the effect which might be *reasonably anticipated* from their exhibition. The circumstance strikingly shows the extent of the divine indulgence. The perverse rejection of the first sign alone would clearly show them unworthy of being favored with another. But God multiplies mercies, even when judgments are most richly deserved. He gives sign upon sign, as well as line upon line.

9. *Take of the water of the river.* That is, of the river Nile. This, it would appear, was a miracle to be wrought for the confirmation of Moses' calling

voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour *it* upon the dry *land*: and [f] the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry *land*.

[f] ch. 7. 19.

10 ¶ And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but [g] I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

[g] ch. 6. 12. Jer. 1. 6.

before the Israelites and not before the Egyptians, for in that mentioned, ch. 7. 17, the waters *in* the river were to be turned into blood, here the water *taken out* of the river. The sign imported, perhaps, that the time was now at hand when God would judge the Egyptians for the death of the Hebrew infants, whose blood they had shed in the waters.

10. *O my Lord, I am not eloquent.* Heb. איש דברים *ish debarim, a man of words.* Thus, Job, 11. 2, 'A man of lips,' i. e. a talkative man; Eng. 'a man full of talk.' Job, 22. 8, 'Man of arm;' i. e. mighty man. Ps. 140. 11, 'man of tongue;' i. e. prattler, or, perhaps, slanderer. The Gr. has ουκ ικανος ειμι, *I am not sufficient.* We cannot but wonder at the backwardness of Moses, although we are forced to admire the fidelity of the historian in thus frankly recording his own incredulity and perverseness. Though it is doubtless true that nothing becomes a man so much as humility, yet diffidence may degenerate into distrust, and carry us into a criminal disobedience of the positive commands of God. He who calls us into the field of action can give us both wisdom and strength to perform the work which he has laid upon us. When Moses expressed his inherent inability to execute the mighty charge, he did well; but when he resisted the appointment, after so many promises and signs, he failed in his duty, and betrayed a spirit of the most culpable unbelief. But even this was borne with. —¶ *Neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken.* Heb. 'Since yesterday, and since the third day.' A usual form of speech to intimate time past in general. See Note on Gen. 31. 2. Some have supposed that Moses labored under a natural defect of utterance, and that he declined the commanded service from an apprehension that the effect of his message might be defeated in the delivery of it. He is supposed therefore to intimate in the present passage, that as the infirmity of which he speaks had been of long standing, and as he perceived no alteration in himself for the better in this respect during the present interview, he knew not any reason to think that the difficulty was likely to be obviated; for if at this time, while God was speaking to him, who had power at once to remove all impediment of speech, his defective articulation continued, much more was it likely to continue afterward. But whether his objection was founded upon this, or upon the want of that ready and copious command of language which constitutes the powerful orator, we have not the means of ascertaining. He was soon however taught that he who made the mouth could make it eloquent.—¶ *Slow of speech and of a slow tongue.* Heb. כבד פה וכבד לשון *kebad peh u kebad lashon, heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.* Gr. 'Of a small voice and of a slow tongue.' Chal. 'Of a heavy speech and of a deep tongue.' As the words are rendered in our translation, it would be difficult, perhaps, to mark the distinction between 'slow of speech,' and 'of a slow tongue;' but from the the force of the original we gather, that the former is more appropriate to an imperfect elocution, occasioned by some defect in the action of the organs of speech; the latter, to a want of aptness

11 And the LORD said unto him, [a] Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be [b] with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

[h] Ps. 94. 9. [i] Isai. 50. 4. Jer. 1. 9. Matt. 10. 19. Mark 13. 11. Luke 12. 11, 12. & 21. 14, 15.

13 And he said, O my Lord, [k] send, I pray thee, by the hand *of him whom* thou wilt send.

14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, *Is* not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, [l] he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

[k] Jonah 1. 3. [l] ver. 27. 1 Sam. 10. 2, 3, 5.

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or felicity in adapting one's expressions to the ideas which he wishes to convey. The latter phrase occurs, Exek. 3. 5, 6, where it is rendered, 'hard language,' i. e. obscure, requiring interpretation, as it is immediately added, 'whose words thou canst not understand.' There is perhaps an intimation that in the long lapse of forty years he had almost lost the true pronunciation of the Egyptian language.

11. *Who hath made man's mouth.* Heb. מִי שָׂם פֶּה לָאָדָם *mi sam peh leadam, who put the mouth to man*, or, *to Adam?* Targ. Jon. 'Who is he who placed the utterance of speech in the mouth of Adam the first man?' Arab. 'Who created pronunciation to man?' By this appeal to Moses respecting the origin of the human faculties, God would have him to infer, that he who bestowed them upon the first man could, with infinite ease, endow him with those which were lacking and remedy those which were imperfect.

13. *O my Lord, send I pray thee*, &c. Chal. and Targ. Jerus. 'Send now by the hand of him who is worthy to be sent.' Gr. 'Choose another able man whom thou wilt send.' By the Heb. idiom the term 'hand' is used to denote any kind of instrumentality or ministry; thus Ex. 9. 35, 'As the Lord had spoken by Moses.' Heb. '*By the hand* of Moses.' 2 Kings, 17. 13, 'Yet the Lord testified against Israel by all the prophets.' Heb. '*By the hand* of all prophets.' Is. 64. 7, 'And has consumed us because of our iniquities.' Heb. '*By the hand* of our iniquities.'—The reluctance of Moses to engage in the work is not yet overcome. And who can wonder that the anger of the Lord was kindled against him? Had an earthly monarch been thus rudely treated by one of his subjects, whom he chose to honor by sending him as his representative to a foreign court, would he not have been justified in spurning the man from his presence, and conferring the high distinction upon some one else? So, had God taken Moses at his word, and entirely discarded him from the honorable service to which he was thus called, he would only have treated him as he deserved. But the divine forbearance was not yet exhausted.

14. *Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother* The literal rendering of this clause is 'Is not Aaron thy brother the Levite?' which we cannot but understand as implying, that in consequence of Moses' unbelieving waywardness on this occasion, the distinguishing honor of the priesthood, and of being the official head of the house of Levi, the person in whom the dignity of that name should be especially centred, which would otherwise have been bestowed upon him, should now be conferred upon his brother Aaron, and perpetuated in his family. In this fact the expression of the Lord's anger consisted. Otherwise how was Aaron any more 'the Levite' than Moses? We find accordingly the forfeited privilege of Moses thus se

15 And [m]thou shalt speak unto him, and [n]put words in his mouth:

[m] ch. 7. 1, 2. [n] Numb. 22. 38. & 23. 5, 12, 16. Deut. 18. 18. Isai. 51. 16. Jer. 1. 9.

and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and [o]will teach you what ye shall do.

[o] Deut. 5. 31.

cured to Aaron, 1 Chron. 23. 13, 'And Aaron was separated that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless his name for ever.' This, we suppose would have been the honor of Moses, had he yielded a ready obedience to the divine mandate. The event teaches us that those who decline the labor and hazard connected with the call of God to a special service, may thereby forfeit and forego a blessing of which they little dream.——¶ *I know that he can speak well.* Heb. כִּי דַבֵּר יְדַבֵּר *ki dabbĕr yedabbĕr, that speaking he will speak.*——¶ *Behold, he cometh forth to meet thee.* This was plainly the annunciation of a *future* event. As Moses had not hitherto thought of leaving Midian, nor had yet started upon his journey thence, if Aaron was now on his way to meet his brother, it must have been in consequence of a divine suggestion, for from no other source could he have had any intimation that he *should meet* him. Yet no one can question that God, from his foresight of Moses' departure from Midian, might have put it into the heart of Aaron to go forth anticipating an interview with one who was dear to him by nature, and whom, after an absence of forty years he would be very desirous to see. The hearts of the different agents are often moved to the same work at a great distance from each other. It would seem that the Most High was simultaneously drawing Aaron with one hand from Egypt, and Moses with the other from Midian. The vision ought undoubtedly at once to have impelled Moses forward to a compliance with the divine injunction; but as Omniscience saw the result from the beginning, he provided a new stimulus to his apathy in the promise of meeting his brother in the desert, whom he determined by a secret impulse to lead forth for that purpose. In a manner somewhat analogous Ananias was directed in a vision to go and meet Saul of Tarsus, Acts, 9. 17, in order to be an instrument of opening his eyes and confirming his faith. This favor the perverse importunity of Moses extorted from God, but he, in the plenitude of his goodness, determined to elicit from the fault of his servant new matter of grace; as it is his to bring light out of darkness. In saying that he knew that Aaron would be 'glad in his heart' upon meeting his brother, he designs perhaps to administer a covert reproof to the tardiness of Moses; q. d. 'Aaron is coming forth with alacrity, and shall hail thee with joy and exhilaration of spirits, whilst thou, restrained by sinful distrust and weighed down with sadness, canst scarcely drag thyself forward to a meeting.'

15. *And thou shalt speak unto him,* &c. The Lord in these words declares that he will not admit his plea of, 'I pray thee have me excused,' and yet so does it as to consult his servant's honor against his will. When he might justly have substituted another in his room, he still condescends to employ him, and though he divides the office, and joins Aaron in commission with him, he endows his reluctant emissary with the highest dignity. While Aaron was to supply by his native ready utterance, the deficiency of Moses in this respect, the latter was to convey to his brother, *as from God himself,* the instructions and directions which should from time to time be given him.——¶ *I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth*

16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and p thou shalt be to him instead of God.

17 And thou shalt take q this rod in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

p ch. 7. 1. & 18. 19. q ver. 2.

18 ¶ And Moses went, and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which *are* in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.

Chal. 'My Word shall be with thy mouth and with his mouth.' Gr. 'I will open thy mouth and his mouth.' Even Aaron himself, however eloquent, could not speak to the purpose unless God was with his mouth. The possession of the best gifts does not supersede the necessity of divine assistance.

16. *He shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.* Chal. 'He shall speak for thee with the people, and shall be thine interpreter, and thou shalt be as a prince (רב *rab*) unto him.' Jerus. Targ. 'Thou shalt be to him a master inquiring doctrine from before the Lord.' Gr. and Vulg. Thou shalt be to him in things pertaining to God;' the very phrase which Paul employs, Heb. 5. 1, 'For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men *in things pertaining to God.*' How strikingly does this illustrate the Apostle's declaration that 'the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.' We see a *persevering beneficence* towards Moses, that fills us with amazement. When we should rather expect that the fire which had spared the bush would consume the recusant, we behold a continued triumph of mercy over judgment.

17. *Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand.* Gr. 'This rod which was turned into a serpent, shalt thou take,' &c. The end of his mission was to be accomplished rather by *acting* than by *speaking*, and he is commanded to take with him his shepherd's rod, not only as an instrument for working wonders, and an ensign of authority, but also as a memento of the mean condition out of which he had been called, and as a means of pouring deeper contempt upon the state and pomp of Pharaoh. In like manner on a subsequent occasion the simple sling of David was made to put to shame the ponderous armor of Goliath. The more humble the guise in which we go against the enemies of God, the more signal the glory of their defeat.

18. *Moses went and returned to Jethro.* Heb. אל יתר *el Yether, to Jether;* but in the close of the verse 'Jethro,' as usual. Thus the person who in Nehem. 6. 12, is called 'Geshem,' is in v. 6, called 'Gashmu.' Moses was prompted by a sense of justice and decency to acquaint his father-in-law with his intention to leave Midian and go into Egypt; but he saw fit to conceal from Jethro the errand upon which God had sent him, lest he should endeavor to hinder or discourage him from so difficult and dangerous an enterprise. In this conduct the piety and prudence of Moses are equally conspicuous with his modesty and humility. He determines to guard against all temptations to disobedience, and at the same time not to indulge in a vain-glorious ostentation of the high honor conferred upon him. This part of Moses' conduct is a striking proof that the privilege of being admitted to near communion with God will never generate a contemptuous disregard for those whom we are bound in the relations of life to honor.——¶ *Go in peace.* Gr. 'Go prospering;' an invocation of general welfare. See Note on Gen. 29, 6.—37. 4.

19 And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for [r] all the men are dead which sought thy life.

[r] ch. 2. 15, 23. Matt. 2. 20.

20 And Moses took his wife, and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took [s] the rod of God in his hand.

[s] ch. 17. 9. Numb. 20. 8, 9.

19. *And the Lord said.* Aben Ezra says, and we think with great probability, that this should be rendered in the pluperfect tense, 'The Lord *had* said; i. e. on some other occasion not particularly specified. He observes moreover that as a general rule events are not recorded by the sacred writers in the exact order in which they occurred.——¶ *The men are dead which sought thy life.* Heb. מבקשים את נפשך *mebakshim eth naphsheka, which (were) seeking thy soul.* On the sense of the word 'soul,' see Note on Gen. 2, 7. Chal. 'Which sought to kill thee.' The phrase, 'to seek the soul' is sometimes used in a good sense, as Ps. 142, 4. (Heb.) 'No man sought my soul;' (Eng.) 'No man *cared for* my soul;' yet it usually signifies seeking with a murderous intent, thus explained 1 Kings, 19, 10. 'And they seek my life (soul) *to take it away.*' This declaration would remove a fear which it was natural that Moses should feel, though we do not learn that he expressed it. A grand obstacle would meet him on the very threshold, should the blood formerly shed by him be required at his hand. God therefore allays all his fears on this head by assuring him that no avengers of that deed were now alive to trouble him. It is probable that the information thus conveyed to him was important to be given to Jethro in order to obtain his consent to his son-in-law's departure. It is scarcely to be supposed that he would have bestowed his daughter upon a wandering stranger without being made acquainted with the leading events of his previous history; nor after his being an inmate of his house for forty years, would he be willing to see him and his daughter rush into danger without some prospect of escape. His scruples would be of course removed by the assurance of a heavenly call, accompanied by the promise of a happy issue.

20. *Moses took his wife and his sons,* &c. Thus clearly intimating the purpose of a final departure from Midian, and of a permanent settlement in Egypt. The single ass for his family shows an humble equipment for a messenger of God, but the Gr. has *τα υποζυγια, the beasts of burden,* and the Hebrew usage in this particular as illustrated in the Note on Gen. 24, 10, will show that we are not necessarily shut up to the precise letter of the narrative. This is confirmed by the following extract from the 'Pict. Hist. of Palestine,' page 184. 'The original narrative speaks but of one ass, 'set them upon an ass;' but, as it seems preposterous to suppose that there was but one ass for them all, it is likely that, as often happens, the singular is here put for the plural; and that the meaning is, 'he set every one of them upon an ass.' We do not recollect any modern instance of asses being employed in a journey across this desert, whereas the present is far from being the only ancient instance. In fact, there seem to have been, in very ancient times, greater facilities for travel across this desert than at present. Perhaps it was not so desolate as now; although even now we believe that during the winter and early spring it might be crossed on asses. Then there seem also to have been caravanserais in districts where no one now expects to find such a convenience; and that the way across this and other deserts was com-

21 And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see *that* thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand: but [u] I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.

t ch. 3. 20.

u ch. 7. 3, 13. & 9. 12, 35. & 10. 1. & 14. 8. Deut. 2. 30. Josh. 11. 20. Isai. 63. 17. John 12. 40. Rom. 9. 18.

paratively safe appears from numerous instances, such as the journeys of the patriarchs to Egypt, those of Eliezer and Jacob to Mesopotamia, and this of Moses to Egypt from the eastern gulf, with his wife and two children. Indeed, if there were no attendants with this party, it would seem that the wife of Moses returned to Midian with her two sons, unaccompanied by any man. We think it very possible, however, that there may have been attendants, although the Scriptural narrative has no intimation to that effect. However, the absence of any acts of robbery, or of the fear of any such acts, from those who crossed the deserts in all the early Hebrew history, is a remarkable circumstance when we consider the acts of constant violence upon travellers which now take place, and the strong apprehensions with which a journey across any of the Arabian or Syrian deserts is now regarded.'——¶ *Returned to the land of Egypt.* That is, took up his journey *towards* the land of Egypt. See Note on Gen. 22, 3.——¶ *Took the rod of God in his hand.* Chal. 'The rod by which miracles were to be wrought.' This staff is called 'the rod of God,' partly because it was appropriated to God's special service to be the instrument of all his glorious works; and partly to show that whatever was done by it was not effected by any intrinsic virtue in the rod itself or in the hand of Moses which wielded it, but solely by the power of God, who was pleased, for the greater confusion of his enemies, to employ so mean an instrument. It would seem that there was a designed though latent antithesis between the poorness of his equipage and the dignity conferred upon him by the mystic rod which he bore in his hand. The outward eye, as he passed along, beheld only an humble wayfarer clad in coarse habiliments, and slowly moving by the side of the beasts, loaded with the burden of his wife and children, but in the simple staff that supported his steps slept the hidden virtue of Omnipotence itself! It had but to be waved in the air and the salubrious Nile run a river of blood, and hail and pestilence and lightning and thunders waited upon its movements! What sceptre of royalty ever invested its possessor with such a grandeur!

21. *And the Lord said unto Moses,* &c. Moses has not as yet given an exact recital of the various miracles which he was commanded to work, but from the language of his verse we cannot doubt that all the successive prodigies of power of which we read in the sequel had been previously enjoined, and the process of the whole affair accurately made known. This was in order to prepare him for the issue, lest upon a first and second abortive attempt he should despair of moving the mind of Pharaoh, and renounce his rod and his calling together. Here therefore God exhorts him to hold on in persevering constancy and not desist from his work till every item of the divine injunctions had been complied with. Let him not suppose that his failure in the first instance to gain his point would be owing simply to an *evil accident;* nor let him deem that a puny mortal could safely treat miraculous agency as a mockery. On the contrary, he was to carry with him the assurance that whatever was the immediate result, however adverse it might *seem* to the deliverance of his people, the hand of

God was in it all, for the stout heart of the king was to be brought down by repeated blows, and the whole train of events so ordered that he should be magnificently triumphed over. This is indicated still more plainly in what follows.——¶ *Which I have put in thine hand.* Which I have put in thy power; which I have enabled and authorized thee to perform before him.——¶ *I will harden his heart.* Heb. אחזק את לבו *ehazzĕk eth libbo, I will strengthen his heart.* Thus the Most High precludes the possibility of ascribing the result to any thing unforeseen or fortuitous; or of supposing that he could not, if he pleased, have curbed the tyrant's arrogance and brought him to submit in a moment. Pharaoh will not hold out in rebellion because he *could* not be subdued, but because infinite wisdom had great ends to accomplish in suffering him to prolong his obstinacy. But as the language here employed is liable to be wrested widely from its legitimate meaning, it will be necessary to weigh it with more than ordinary precision. It is worthy of remark that the Heb. text in speaking of the 'hardening' of Pharaoh's heart, employs in different parts of the narrative three distinct words differing from each other by a marked diversity of import, but which are all indiscriminately rendered in the common version by 'harden.' These are חזק *hazak, to strengthen, confirm;* כבד *kabad, to make heavy;* and קשה *kashah, to make hard,* in the sense of *difficult, intractable, rigid* or *stiff.* The whole number of passages in which Pharaoh's heart is said to have been 'hardened' is nineteen, in thirteen of which the term employed is '*hazak*;' in five, '*kabad*;' and in one '*kashah*.' The passage before us belongs to the former class; 'I will harden (אחזק *ehazzĕk*) his heart;' i. e. I will make strong, firm, determined. The original properly signifies *to brace* or *tighten up,* in opposition to a state of *relaxation, remission, yielding.* Thus Is. 35, 3, 'Strengthen ye the weak hands and *confirm* the feeble knees.' In its legitimate import it is applied rather to the vigorous tension of a man's courage or resolution than to the obduration of the moral sensibilities. Its prevailing sense may be gathered from the following passages: Jer. 23. 14, 'They *strengthen* also the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness;' i. e. they make them more determined. Judg. 9, 24, 'And upon the men of Shechem which *aided* him in the killing of his brethren. Heb. 'which *strengthened* him;' i. e. instigated him. Is. 41. 7, 'So the carpenter *encouraged* the goldsmith;' i. e. urged on. 2 Chron. 26. 8, 'And his name spread abroad, for he *strengthened himself* exceedingly;' i. e. he acted with great vigor, conquering all obstacles by the energy of his character. When God therefore is represented as saying, 'I will harden (strengthen) Pharoah's heart,' the language implies simply, that the course of events should be so ordered that, without any *positive divine influence* exerted upon him, the haughty king should take occasion to *confirm himself* in his disregard of the counsels of the Most High, and instead of being bowed and humbled by the displays of Omnipotence should array himself in a posture of more *determined resistance* to the mandate of Jehovah. This God is said to have *done* because he *permitted it to be done.* A similar instance is related in Deut. 2. 30, 'But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the Lord thy God *hardened his spirit,* and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.' So also Josh. 11. 20, 'For it was of the Lord to *harden their hearts* that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly.' Yet in the present instance it is expressly said, ch. 9. 34, that Pharaoh *hardened his*

22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, [x] Israel *is* my son, [y] *even* my first-born.

23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, [z] I will slay thy son, *even* thy first-born.

24 ¶ And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD [a] met him, and sought to [b] kill him.

[x] Hos. 11. 1. Rom. 9. 4. 2 Cor. 6. 18. [y] Jer. 31. 9. James 1. 18.

[z] ch. 11. 5. & 12. 29. [a] Numb. 22. 22. [b] Gen. 17. 14.

own heart; and the exhortation of the Psalmist is, Ps. 95. 8, '*Harden not your hearts*, as in the provocation,' as though it were a voluntary act in those in whom it takes place with which God could be by no means chargeable. The expression involves no difficulty provided the ordinary *usus loquendi* be borne in mind.

22. *Israel is my son, even my first-born.* That is, beloved and favored beyond other nations; dear to me as a first-born child. Thus Hos. 11. 1, 'When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called *my son* out of Egypt.' 'Israel' is here a collective denomination for all the natural seed of Jacob, who are called God's 'son' as a title of favor, and his 'first-born' as a note of honorable relationship, pointing to their pre-eminence above all other nations. For as the first-born in a family was consecrated to God as his peculiar portion, so were the children of Israel adopted from among the nations as a peculiar treasure above all people, Ex. 19. 5, from whom was appointed to descend, according to the flesh, the Messiah, 'the first-born of every creature.' The epithet 'first-born' is at once a term of dignity and of endearment. Thus Ps. 89. 26, 27, 'He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make him *my first-born*, higher than the king's of the earth.' This is a mutual recognition of the privileges of adoption.—— ¶ *Let my son go.* He is *my* son, not yours; he comes under allegiance to another lord; you are not to claim or exercise jurisdiction over him.

23. *And I say unto thee, Let my son go*, &c. These, it would seem, were the words not of Moses, but of God speaking through the person of Moses. Such, at least, is the usual and more obvious interpretation; yet there is a remarkable apparent change of persons in passing from the 22d to the 23d verse, and if it were possible to conceive of the words being spoken at the same time to Moses himself on the principle announced, Is. 8. 18, 'Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel,' it would seem to afford an easier explication of the remarkable incident mentioned in the two next verses, which comes in a manner so abrupt and almost unaccountable in this connexion. It would certainly tend to inspire Moses with a deeper impression of the fearful consequences of Pharaoh's refusing compliance with the divine mandate, had he himself barely escaped the loss of his own son by reason of his neglect to fulfil an express injunction of heaven. May it not then be supposed that there is involved in the address to Pharaoh an intimation also to Moses himself of danger to his first-born, if he neglected longer to circumcise him, and put him into that condition in which he could acceptably serve the God of his fathers? By circumcising his son he would put him virtually into the same relation to God as the nation of Israel would be in when 'let go' by Pharaoh from their bondage, and brought to worship and serve him in the wilderness.

24. *It came to pass by the way in the inn.* Heb. במלון *bammalon, in the lodging-place.* For the true import of this expression see Note on Gen. 42. 27.

It would appear that they had not yet reached the place of their final destination, though they may have entered within the bounds of Egypt. Comp. v. 20.——¶ *The Lord met him.* That is, met him in the tokens of displeasure. Gr. and Chal. 'The angel of the Lord met him.' It is undoubtedly clear from many passages of the sacred narrative, that the term 'Lord' (Jehovah) is synonymous with the 'angel of the Lord,' and that 'angel of the Lord' is used to denote the *supernatural manifestation of the Deity by means of some visible or sensible symbol.*——¶ *Sought to kill him.* That is, made a show of intending to kill him; manifested alarming signs of wrath, probably by visiting him with some threatening disease. Language like this must of course be understood in consistency with what we know of the divine attributes. He in whose hands our breath is has no occasion to *seek* to take away the life of any of his creatures. The being which he originated he can at any instant extinguish. The phrase is doubtless advisedly chosen to indicate a *delay*, a *respite*, on the part of the Most High, as if he were *reluctant* to enter upon the work of judgment. But who is to be understood by the pronoun 'him' in this connexion? Was it Moses himself or his first-born son, who was the subject of the menacing judgment? The Arabic version of Saadias has 'he rushed upon his son,' and as, according to the view suggested above, the first-born of Moses was the subject last spoken of, we see no objection to consider that as the true construction. At the same time, it may be properly said that Moses himself was put in peril in the person of his son. See Note on Gen. 9. 25. The probability we think is, that there was some criminal delay in Moses in respect both to this rite and to the prosecution of his mission, and that it pleased God, in accordance with his conditional denunciation above mentioned, v. 23, to visit his son with some alarming sickness which threatened to prove fatal. In the note on Ex. 2. 22, we adverted to the very great improbability of Moses being the father of a *very young* child at the time when he set out for Egypt, which was forty years after he first entered Midian. How much *more* improbable is it that his eldest son was now an infant or a little child? We cannot but infer from the narrative, ch. 2. 15—22, that Moses married shortly after entering the family of Jethro, and that the birth of his first-born occurred in all probability within the usual period of such an event. If so, and if his circumcision had been deferred to the present time, instead of being now an infant or a child, he must have been a full grown man of upwards of thirty years of age. And if this be admitted we can see an ample reason for the divine displeasure manifested on this occasion. It was not a delay of a few months, but of many years, that elicited such tokens of judgment; and if it be asked why this expression of anger was reserved to the present time; why it vented itself rather at this particular juncture than at any other; we can only suggest in reply that it was with a view to give it a *typical* or *symbolical* import; to bring it into connexion with the threatening against Pharaoh, in order that Moses might have a more impressive sense of the danger of disobeying the commands of Heaven. There would seem, at any rate, to be some link of connexion between this incident and the previous address to Moses, v. 22, 23, and if any other can be suggested more probable, we have no interest in adhering to our proposed interpretation, although it is one that does not, that we perceive, offer any violence to the text. The reader who refers to Rosenmuller's Commentary will see that it has long been doubted to whom to refer the pronouns relative.

25 Then Zipporah took [c] a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast *it* at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband *art* thou to me.

[c] Josh. 5. 2, 3.

25. *Then Zipporah took a sharp stone,* &c. That is, a knife made of a stone sharpened. That such instruments were in use at this early period, may be inferred from Josh. 5. 2, 'The Lord said unto Joshua, make thee *sharp knives,* (Heb. 'knives of stones') and circumcise again the children of Israel;' where the Chal. has 'sharp razors;' and the Gr. 'stone knives.' Thus Herodotus, describing the preparations for embalming a dead body, says, 'they cut around the hips with a *sharp Ethiopic stone.*'—'Flints and other hard stones formed the tools and cutting instruments of almost all nations before the art of working iron was discovered. We find such instruments still in use among savages, and discover them occasionally buried in different parts of Europe and Asia, showing the universality of their use when the people were ignorant of iron. They were no doubt formed, as savages form them at present; that is, they were shaped and sharpened on a kind of grindstone, until, at a great expense of time, labor, and patience, they were brought to the desired figure. They were then fitted to a handle, and used nearly in the same way as we use our instruments and tools of iron. From the act of Zipporah, we are, however, not authorized to infer that instruments and tools of metal were not common at the time and in the neighborhood before us. We shall soon have occasion to see the contrary. The fact seems to be, that Zipporah knew that sharp stones were exclusively used in Egypt and elsewhere, in making incisions on the human person; and she therefore either used such an instrument, or employed in its room one of the flints with which the region they were traversing is abundantly strewed.' *Pict. Bible.* As the danger apprehended was immediately averted upon the circumcision of their son, it is plain that the delay of this ordinance was its procuring cause, although we are not informed whether the parents learned this from an express revelation, or from the course of their own reflections. There is doubtless something abhorrent to our ideas of propriety in the mother's performing this rite upon an adult son, but against this we must set the whole strength of the evidence that he *was* adult, that he was the *first-born,* and also the fact that it was a *mother* complying with a divine requisition, and that among a people and in a state of society whose sentiments and usages were very different from ours.——¶ *Cast it at his feet.* Heb. ותגע לרגליו *vattigga leraglav, made it to touch his feet.* Chal. 'Brought it near before him.' Gr. 'She fell at his feet.' Jerus. Targ. 'She laid it at the feet of the destroyer.' The clause is difficult of explication. By the mass of commentators, Zipporah is supposed to have cast the prepuce, or circumcised foreskin, of her son, besmeared with blood, at the feet of Moses, and in a reproachful and angry manner to have addressed him in the words immediately following. Others, however, with perhaps equal plausibility, suppose it to mean, that she made it to touch his feet, or rather his legs, in the act of cutting, for the original term is by no means that which is ordinarily employed to signify *casting* or *throwing down.* The true interpretation is doubtless to be determined by the ensuing words. ——¶ *Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.* Heb. חתן דמים אתה לי *hathan damim attah li, a spouse,* or *bridegroom, of bloods art thou to me.* Here again the interpreter finds himself encompassed with difficulties. The question that almost defies solution is, whether these

26 So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband *thou art*, because of the circumcision.

27 ¶ And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness [d] to meet

[d] ver. 14.

words are to be considered as addressed to Moses or to her son. By those who adopt the common construction, and suppose Moses himself to have been the person endangered, and the child an infant, Zipporah is understood as virtually saying; 'Behold the evidence of my intense affection towards thee. I have jeoparded the life of my babe as the ransom for thine. In order to free thee from danger, and, as it were, to espouse thee to myself anew, to make thee once more a bridegroom, I have not shunned to shed the blood of this dear child, even under perilous circumstances, when the hardships of the journey may render the operation fatal.' But a far preferable construction, in our opinion, is to consider the words as addressed to the son, now grown up, from his being *espoused*, as it were, to God by the seal of circumcision. Aben Ezra remarks, 'It is the custom of women to call a son when he is circumcised *a spouse* (חתן *hathan*).' Kimchi in his Lexicon, under חתן concurs in the same view, which is also adopted by Schindler, Spencer, Mede, and others. The idea that Zipporah intended to upbraid her husband with the cruelty of the rite which his religion required him to perform, seems hardly tenable; for as she was a Midianitess, and so a daughter of Abraham by Keturah, it is not easy to imagine her altogether a stranger to the ceremony of circumcision, which had been from the earliest ages perpetuated in all the branches of the Abrahamic race, and is even observed by the followers of Mohammed at the present day, not as an institution of the prophet himself, but as an ancient rite received from Ishmael.

26. *So he let him go.* Heb. ירף ממנו *yereph mimmenu, he slackened from him.* That is, God desisted from the further effects of his displeasure. The signs of his anger ceased when the occasion ceased. Jerus. Targ. 'The Destroyer let him go.' The phrase is taken from the act of relaxing a vigorous grasp. The original term is similarly applied, 1 Chron. 21. 15, 'And he said unto the angel that destroyed, It is enough *stay* (הרף *hereph*, *relax*, *remit*) now thine hand.' So also Josh. 10. 6, 'And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, *slack* (תרף *hereph*) not thine hand from thy servants, &c.' Notwithstanding all the obscurity that envelopes the transaction here recorded, we learn from it, (1) That God takes notice of and is much displeased with the sins of his own people, and that the putting away of their sins is indispensably necessary to the removal of the divine judgments. (2) That no circumstances of prudence or conveniency can ever with propriety be urged as an excuse for neglecting a clearly commanded duty, especially the observance of sacramental ordinances. (3) That he who is to be the interpreter of the law to others ought in all points to be blameless, and in all things conformed to the law himself. (4) That when God has procured the proper respect to his revealed will, the controversy between him and the offender is at an end; the object of his government being not so much to avenge himself as to amend the criminal.—From Ex. 18. 2, it would seem that Zipporah and her sons were sent back to his father-in-law, where they remained till Jethro brought them to Moses in the wilderness.

27. *The Lord said unto Aaron*, &c. The scene of domestic danger and distress described above is speedily followed by another of a pleasanter kind, viz., the interview between the two brothers in the wilderness. The present

Moses. And he went, and met him in [e] the mount of God, and kissed him.

28 And Moses [f] told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the [g] signs which he had commanded him.

29 ¶ And Moses and Aaron [h] went, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.

[e] ch. 3. 1. [f] ver. 15, 16. [g] ver. 8, 9. [h] ch. 3. 16.

phrase however should rather be rendered 'The Lord *had* said,' for the command had no doubt reached him some time previous, as Moses was yet in the neighborhood of the sacred mount where the vision appeared. Although the command is recited in the most general terms, 'Go into the wilderness,' yet we cannot doubt that detailed directions as to the *particular place* where he should meet his brother accompanied it.——¶ *He went and met him in the mount of God.* That is, in or at Horeb, called the 'Mount of God' for the reasons stated in the Note on Ex. 3. 1. Chal. 'In the mount where the Glory of the Lord had been revealed.' Aaron was now eighty-three years of age, though we are wholly unacquainted with his previous history. We have every reason to believe, however, from the fact that God selected him as the companion of Moses in so arduous an enterprise, and from his subsequent conduct and station, that his character was one of no ordinary stamp. While residing in Egypt he had been making progress in knowledge, in moral worth, and in influence among his countrymen. Like his brother, he had been maturing for the great work in which he was now to engage.——¶ *And kissed him.* In remarking upon the interview between Joseph and Jacob, Gen. 46. 29, we observed that the phrase 'he fell on his neck' might be understood of both; and in like manner we cannot question but that the embrace of Moses and Aaron was mutual. Accordingly the Gr. renders it, 'They kissed each other.'

28. *And Moses told Aaron all the words*, &c. To Moses it must have been highly gratifying, after a sojourn of forty years among strangers, to meet his own brother, to receive from him the welcome tidings of his family and nation, and to impart to his friendly ear the story of his own life during so long an interval. On the other hand, what pleasure must it have afforded to Aaron, to learn from the mouth of his brother the great designs of providence respecting themselves and their people? With what overflowings of heart would they join in a fraternal embrace and mingle their sighs and tears? With what ardor would their united prayers and vows and praises ascend to heaven? How confirmed the faith, how forward the zeal of each, strengthened and stimulated by that of the other? Well may they go on their way rejoicing. They are following God, and they must prosper.

29. *Moses and Aaron went and gathered together.* We do not learn that any doubt or hesitancy was evinced on the part of Aaron. Convinced by the intimations he had himself received, and by the scene of wonders which Moses had related to him, he is ready to go with his brother on their momentous errand, and as if to indicate the alacrity with which they now proceeded forward, passing in silence over all the intermediate details of their journey, we all at once find them in the midst of their countrymen. Before this, however, possibly before the meeting of the two brothers at Horeb, Moses had directed his wife and sons to return to his father-in-law Jethro. He doubtless had good reasons for this step, though we are left in ignorance what they were. At what time and under what circumstances they met again, we shall see in a subsequent part of the history.

30 [i] And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

31 And the people [k] believed: and

[i] ver. 16. [k] ch. 3. 18. ver. 8, 9.

30. *And Aaron spake*, &c. Having assembled the elders Aaron begins, according to the divine appointment, v. 16, to act as 'spokesman' in delivering the message, while Moses at the same time, in the discharge of *his* appropriate office, performs the miraculous signs which were to be a seal of his commission. There can be no doubt that the rendering of our version, which ascribes the working of the signs to Aaron is erroneous. The pronoun 'he' should be inserted before 'did the signs,' to indicate that Moses and not Aaron is the true subject of the verb. Comp. v. 21.——¶ *In the sight of the people.* As nothing has been hitherto said of the 'people,' but only of the 'elders,' we must either understand this of the elders alone, called 'people' in virtue of their representative character, or else we must suppose that a considerable body of the people, such as could be conveniently assembled, were present with the elders who acted in their name. The same remark is to be made respecting the term 'people' in the next verse. The former is perhaps the most probable interpretation, not only because that mode of speech is common, but because the act of solemn worship that ensued appears to have taken place in a meeting; and if so, it must have been a meeting of a select number, and not of the whole nation, who cannot be supposed to have been convened on the occasion. The result was such as God had foretold, Ex. 3. 18. The return of Moses after his long exile, in company with his brother whom they well knew and highly esteemed; the cheering nature of the message addressed to them in the name of the great I AM; the convincing demonstrations of the divine power in the miracles which they had witnessed; all conspired to produce in their breasts the deepest emotions of wonder and joy; a strong confidence in God; and an assurance that he was indeed about to show them mercy. In testimony of this, and as a solemn act of reverential gratitude, the whole assembly bowed their heads and worshipped. They accounted it not sufficient merely to ponder in their hearts these signal tokens of the divine interposition in their behalf, but were prompted to give expression to their feelings by appropriate outward signs. Such external acts of reverence are indeed of comparatively little account in the eyes of him who weighs the spirits, but as they are helps to our infirmities, and go to show more fully the *entireness* of our devotion to our heavenly benefactor, they are always acceptable in his sight when springing from the proper motive.

31 and when they heard that the LORD had [l] visited the children of Israel, and that he [m] had looked upon their affliction, then [n] they bowed their heads and worshipped.

[l] ch. 3. 16. [m] ch. 2. 25. & 3. 7. [n] Gen. 24. 26. ch. 12. 27. 1 Chron. 29. 20.

——¶ *And when they heard.* Heb. וישמעו *va-yishme-u, and they heard.* Gr. και επιστευσαν ὁ λαος και εχαρη, *and the people believed and rejoiced*, that the Lord, &c. That an import analogous to this, viz., that of a *joyful hearing*, is conveyed by the original term would appear from 2 Kings, 20. 13, 'And Hezekiah *hearkened* unto them,' which in the parallel passage, Is. 39. 2, is rendered, 'And Hezekiah *was glad* of them.' We have before had occasion to remark that verbs of the senses frequently imply the exercise of the affections. See Note on Gen. 21. 17.—¶ *Had visited.* Had visited in mercy. See Note on Gen. 21. 1. Chal. 'Had remembered.'—¶ *Looked upon the affliction.* Compassionately regarded. See Note on Ex. 2. 11.

CHAPTER V.

AND afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold [a] a feast unto me in the wilderness.

[a] ch. 10. 9.

CHAPTER V.

The present chapter ushers in the history of the controversy between God and Pharaoh, and its fearful issue in the utter destruction of the daring rebel who had presumed to set himself in array against his Maker. While the incidents mentioned in the close of the preceding chapter were transpiring, Pharaoh was sitting proudly and securely on his throne, surrounded by his obedient subjects, and wholly ignorant of the portentous movement which was taking place in the midst of the wretched bondsmen to whom he was wringing out the waters of a full cup of affliction. He had heard, indeed, of Moses and his singular history. He had been told of his living so long at the court of his predecessor, as the adopted son of the daughter of the king; of his high character and attainments, and his great influence among his countrymen; of his strange abandonment of his conspicuous station, and of the circumstances which led to his flight from Egypt. But if he were still living, he supposed him to be an insignificant exile in some foreign land from which he would never dare again to return. Little did he think that this outcast Israelite was now so near him, having come in the strength of Omnipotence to rescue the oppressed from his grasp and to overwhelm him and his host in utter destruction.

1. *Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh*, &c. They were doubtless accompanied on this occasion by a number of the elders of Israel, to give more weight and solemnity to the demand. Comp. Ex. 3. 18.——¶ *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel.* Moses in addressing the elders of Israel is directed to call God 'the God of their fathers;' but in addressing Pharoah the title employed is, 'the God of Israel,' and this is the first time the title occurs in that connexion in the Scriptures. He is indeed in Gen. 33. 20, called 'the God of Israel,' the *person*, but here it is Israel, the *people*. Though now a poor, afflicted, and despised people, yet 'God is not ashamed to be called their God.' As such he commands Pharaoh to let them go. Whatever claim their oppressor had set up to their persons or services, it was a downright and daring usurpation which God, their rightful Lord and Sovereign, would not tolerate for a moment. Here therefore he moves towards their deliverance, and may be considered as virtually saying in the language of the prophet, Is. 52. 5, 6, 'Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord. Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold it is I.'——¶ *That they may hold a feast unto me.* Heb. חגג *yahogu*. The primary import of the original word חגג *hagag* is to *dance*, rendered, Ps. 107. 27, 'reel too and fro,' probably from the fact that the staggering motion of men in a ship, tossed by a tempest, resembled that of *dancers*. In a secondary sense, it is applied to *keeping a feast religiously*, which was marked by eating, drinking, *dancing*, and mirth. The term is here, therefore, used synecdochally for all the attendant ceremonies of a sacred festival, in which *worship* and *sacrifice* were prominent; for which reason the phrase is rendered by the Chal. 'that they may *sacrifice* before me.'——¶ *In the wilderness.* A retired place was rendered proper from the peculiar religious usages of the He

2 And Pharaoh said, [b] Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, [c] neither will I let Israel go.

3 And they said, [d] The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

[b] 2 Kings 18. 35. Job 21. 15. [c] ch. 3. 19. [d] ch. 3. 18.

brews, which were different from those practised or allowed among the Egyptians.

2. Who is the Lord, &c. Rather, 'Who is Jehovah?—I know not Jehovah.' There is a special reason why this title should here be rendered, verbatim, 'Jehovah,' rather than 'Lord,' viz. that it is mentioned as the *peculiar name* of the God of Israel, whereas the title 'Lord,' was common to the heathen deities, many of them being called 'Baalim,' or 'Lords.' This makes Pharaoh's answer more emphatic, 'Who is Jehovah?'—a name of which he had never before heard. Chal. 'The name of Jehovah is not revealed to me, that I should obey his word.' Targ. Jon. 'I have not found in the book of the angels (gods) the name of Jehovah written: I fear him not.' The reply of Pharaoh is, upon the best construction, marked by a tone of insolence and contempt for which we can find no excuse. Yet it would perhaps be unjust to charge upon him an *intentional* act of impiety, for he was no doubt a worshipper of the gods of Egypt. But he would intimate that he considered Moses and Aaron as the setters-forth of a strange god, whose claims he would not deign to admit. That the poor outcast slaves, who existed by his sufferance, and labored for his pleasure, should have a God of such authority as to prescribe laws for him, was not to be endured. It is as if he had said, 'Who is this unheard-of deity that you call 'Lord?' What greater or better is he than my gods? What have I to do with him? Why should I care for him? He is not the God whom I serve?' From the degraded and despised character of the people of Israel, he no doubt formed his estimate of the God whom they professed to serve, and concluded that he was no more entitled to reverence as a deity, than they were to respect as a people.——¶ *That I should obey his voice.* Heb. אשמע בקלו *eshma bekolo, should hearken to his voice.* See Note on Gen. 16. 3.

3. The God of the Hebrews hath met with us. Heb. נקרא עלינו *nikra alenu*, lit. *is called upon us*, i. e. is invoked and worshipped by us. And accordingly the Chal. has, 'The God of the Jews is invoked upon us.' But the other versions vary. Gr. 'The God of the Hebrews hath called us.' Syr. 'The God of the Hebrews has appeared unto us.' Arab. 'The command of the God of the Hebrews is come unto us.' It is on the whole most probable that נקרא *nikra*, is used by change of letters for נקרה *nikrah, hath met*, the very phrase which occurs Ex. 3. 18.——¶ *Let us go three days' journey*, &c. Instead of reproaching Pharaoh, or threatening him with the judgments of heaven, they adopt a style of humble and respectful entreaty, 'We pray thee;' at the same time representing that the journey they proposed was not a project formed among themselves, but a measure enjoined upon them by the God of their nation, and one which they dared not decline. In saying this it is true they dissemble the design of forsaking Egypt altogether, perhaps with a view to learn from the manner in which he treated a smaller request, what prospect of success they would have in urging a greater. In this they stated no falsehood, but merely concealed a part of the

4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your [e] burdens.

[e] ch. 1. 11.

truth.—As to the moral character of this part of their conduct see Note on Gen. 12. 13.——¶ *Lest he fall upon us with pestilence*, &c. Heb. בדבר *baddeber*. Gr. μη ποτε συναντηση ημιν θανατος η φονος, *lest death or slaughter meet us*. The original word for 'pestilence' is here, as in numerous cases elsewhere, rendered in the Gr. by θανατος *death*. Thus Levit. 26. 25, 'I will send the *pestilence* among you.' Gr. '*the death*.' Deut. 28. 21, 'The Lord shall make the *pestilence* cleave unto thee.' Gr. '*the death*.' Ezek. 33. 27, 'They that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the *pestilence*.' Gr. of '*the death*.' This usage, a parallel to which occurs in the Chaldee paraphrase, is transferred to the New Testament, and is of great importance to the right understanding of the following passages; Rev. 2. 23, 'I will kill her children with *death*;' i. e. with pestilence, by which is sometimes meant any kind of premature or violent death; death out of the common course of nature. Rev. 6. 8, 'And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, and with hunger (famine), and with *death* (i. e. pestilence), and with the beasts of the earth.' So also, probably, Rev. 21. 4, 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more *death*;' i. e. violent death; death occasioned by sudden and fatal casualties or judgments; for that this portion of Scripture does not describe a state of happiness in which its subjects shall be absolutely immortal may be gathered from the language of Isaiah, ch. 65. 19, 20, referring to the same future period; 'And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child *shall die* an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old, shall be accursed.'—This intimation of danger to themselves in case of their neglecting to comply with the divine injunction, would administer a seasonable hint to Pharaoh. For if he were a God so jealous of his honor as to punish his own people for such a delinquency, even when they were forcibly prevented from obeying, how much reason had he to fear the visitations of his wrath, if he openly bade him defiance? It was evidently no very great thing for Pharaoh to have yielded, had he complied with the request of Moses and Aaron. Considering the benefits he had derived from the labors of the Israelites, he might well have allowed them this short respite for a religious service. But when men's pride and passions are roused, reason and humanity might as well make their plea to the deaf adder as to them.

4. *Wherefore do ye let the people from their works?* That is, why do ye *hinder*, or, literally, *cause to desist*. Gr. ινατι διαστρεφετε τον λαον, *wherefore do ye divert*, or *turn away, the people* from their works? It will be observed that Pharaoh takes no notice of what Moses and Aaron had said to him respecting the liberation of the people, but treats them merely as the disturbers of the peace of his kingdom, and as endeavoring to excite sedition among his subjects. The same thing was laid to the charge of Christ and the apostles; Luke, 23. 2, 'And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.' Acts, 24. 5 'For we have found this man a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world.'——¶ *Get you unto your bur-*

5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now *are* [f] many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the [g] taskmasters of

[f] ch. 1. 7, 9. [g] ch. 1. 11.

dens, &c. This command was probably designed more expressly for the elders who had accompanied Moses and Aaron, though he would perhaps intimate at the same time that if the brothers were where they ought to be, they would be bearing their part of the burdens.

5. *The people of the land now are many*, &c. As if he should say, 'If the people are already increased to such a multitude, notwithstanding all the methods taken to prevent it, how much more numerous and formidable will they soon become if suffered to cease from their labor.' Vulg. 'You see that the multitude is increased; how much more, if you give them rest from their works?' Or, the number of the people may be alluded to in order to hint at the greatness of the damage done to the state by the interruption of the labors of so large a body of men. Some of the Jewish commentators give it still a different shade of meaning, viz. that it was absolutely necessary to keep so great a multitude busily employed, lest they should engage in plots of insurrection.

6. *The task-masters of the people and their officers.* These 'task-masters,' lit. 'exactors,' constituting the highest grade of officers, were Egyptians appointed to exact labor of the Israelites. But those termed 'officers,' appear, v. 14—16, to have been Israelites set over their brethren. The latter term is rendered in the Gr. 'Scribes,' i. e. probably men who executed written decrees, or rendered written accounts of their official services, answering with considerable exactness to our modern 'sheriffs.' It is, however, certain that they were under-officers to the task-masters.

the people, and their officers, saying,

7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

7. *Ye shall no more give the people straw*, &c. Commentators have doubted for what particular purpose straw was made use of by the Egyptians in making brick, some supposing it to be employed for fuel in burning the brick, and others that it was cut or chopt fine and mixed with the clay to give more consistency and firmness to the brick when taken from the kiln. The probability is that it was used for both purposes. The Gr. term $\alpha\chi\upsilon\rho\sigma\nu$, by which the Heb. תבן is here rendered, signifying properly *straw* instead of *chaff*, occurs in Mat. 3. 12. 'He will gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the *chaff* (straw) with unquenchable fire;' intimating that when the wheat was separated, the straw was of no farther use, except as fuel for fires. Kypke, in his note on this passage, has the following observation: 'The Jews and other nations burnt straw and stubble, instead of wood, in cooking their meats, in *heating their furnaces*, and in other uses:' for which he cites the Symposiacks of Plutarch; 'Those who melt gold work it by a fire *kindled with straw*.' The same thing is to be inferred from the words of Christ, Mat. 6. 30, 'Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is *cast into the oven*, shall he not much more,' &c. On which Grotius quotes the words of Ulpian the Roman lawyer in a definition of fuel; 'In some regions, as for instance in Egypt, where reeds and the papyrus plant are burnt for fuel, the common appellation 'wood' includes certain species of herbs and thorns and other vegetables. This is accounted for from the fact, that in

8 And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish *aught* thereof; for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.

9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein: and let them not regard vain words.

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most of the eastern countries wood is so extremely scarce, that various species of dried vegetables, grass, straw, flowers, and furze, constitute their principal articles of fuel. But that straw, on the other hand, was used in the composition of brick in Egypt, is evident from the reports of modern travellers. Thus Dr. Shaw, speaking of the bricks found in one of the Egyptian pyramids, says, 'The composition is only a mixture of clay, mud, and *straw*, slightly blended and kneaded together.' Baumgarten, another traveller, speaking of Cairo in Egypt, says, 'The houses for the most part are of brick *mixt with straw* to make them firm. Sir John Chardin tells us, 'That eastern bricks are made of clay, well moistened with water, and *mixed with straw*, which, according to their way of getting the grain out of the ear, is cut into small pieces by a machine which they make use of instead of a flail for thrashing.' ——¶ *As heretofore.* Literally, 'As yesterday and the third day.' See Note on Gen. 31. 2. Hitherto those who labored in the brick-fields had been furnished all the materials for their work, not only the clay of which the bricks were made, but the straw with which they were compacted. But the present order was a great grievance, as much of the time which should have been employed in making the bricks was now consumed in seeking for straw. And this burden must have become more heavy every day, in proportion as the straw thus hunted up became scarce in the neighborhood of the brick-fields. But in all this the lot of the Israelites seems intended to illustrate a frequent law of providence, viz., that the burden of affliction presses the heavier, the nearer the approach of deliverance. His people are not prepared for the destined relief till their cup of woe is full, and all help is entirely despaired of except from heaven.

8. *The tale of the bricks*, &c. That is, the number, the amount of the bricks. This was the very refinement of cruelty to require the end and yet deny the means.——¶ *For they be idle.* A charge than which nothing could be more unreasonable or untrue. The cities they built for Pharaoh, and the other fruits of their labors, were witnesses for them that they were not idle, though it is not unlikely that many of these public works were so intrinsically useless, like the pyramids, that it was little better than idleness to be employed about them; yet diligently employed they certainly were, and he thus basely misrepresents them, that he might have a pretence for increasing their burdens.

9. *Let there more work be laid upon the men.* Heb. תכבד העבדה *tikbad ha-abodah, let the work be heavy* upon the men; which if they performed they would be broken down by it, while if they failed to perform it, they would be punished. So fearful is the alternative which iron-hearted oppression leaves to its poor victims!——¶ *Let them not regard vain words.* Heb. דברי שקר *dibrē shaker, words of lying. Vanity* and *falsehood*, according to the Hebrew idiom, are often used interchangeably for each other. See Note on Ex. 20. 7. If the phrase is to be understood in the sense given it by our translation, it is a directly impious and slanderous imputation upon the words of God, as vain, empty, and delusive. But as the original for 'words,' is often equivalent to 'things,' (See Note on Gen. 15. 1.),

10 ¶ And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.

11 Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not aught of your work shall be diminished.

12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble instead of straw.

13 And the taskmasters hasted *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw.

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the import may be that they were not to indulge themselves in vain hopes, dreams, and aspirations. The Heb. term for *regard* (שעה *shaah*) when used in the sense of *having respect* to a person or thing is usually followed by אל *el*, על *al*, or ל *l* signifying *to*, as Gen. 4. 4, 'And God *had respect unto Abel* (וישע אל הבל *va-yisha el Hebel*) and to his offering.' But when constructed with the preposition ב *b*, *in*, as here, it signifies rather *to meditate* or *to ponder orally* upon any thing, as Ps. 119. 117, ואשעה בחקיך תמיד *ve-esha behukkeka tamid*, *and I will meditate in thy statutes continually*. Accordingly the Gr. renders the present passage, 'Let them care for these words, and let them not care for vain words.' Chal. 'Let them be occupied in it (the work), and let them not be occupied in idle words.' Syr. 'Let them think upon it (the work), and not think upon vain words.' Arab. 'Let them be occupied in it, and not occupy themselves in vain things.' The sense undoubtedly is, that they were to give themselves unremittingly to their work, and not to cherish any vain, wild, illusory hopes, whether the product of their own minds, or suggested to them by others.

10. *I will not give you straw.* I will not allow it to be given. The *taskmasters* were probably Egyptians, while the *officers* were native Israelites. The message would be as grievous to the one as it probably was acceptable to the other.

12. *So the people were scattered abroad.* This dispersion, however, would at least have the effect to make Pharaoh's barbarous usage of his bondmen extensively known, and perhaps to cause them to be pitied and somewhat aided by their compassionate neighbors.—¶ *To gather stubble instead of straw.* 'We are so much in the habit of associating the making of bricks with burning, that the common reader fails to discover that the straw could be for any other use than to burn the bricks. Without disputing that the Egyptians did sometimes burn their bricks, the evidence of ancient remains in their country and the existing customs of the East leave little room to doubt that the use of the straw was to mix with and compact the mass of clay used in making sun-dried bricks, such as we have noticed in the notes on Babylon and on the pyramids. Bricks of this sort are still commonly made in Egypt; and their ancient use in the same country is evinced by the brick pyramids at Dashoor and Faioum. That they were never in the fire is shown by the fact that the straw which enters into their composition has sustained no injury or discoloration. Such bricks are very durable in dry climates like Egypt, but would soon be ruined if exposed to much rain. Herodotus observed it as one of the customs in which the Egyptians were unlike other nations, that they kneaded their clay with their hands, and their dough with their feet.'—*Pict. Bib.*

13. *The task-masters hasted* them. Heb. אצרים *atzim* (*were*) *urgent*, *pressing*. Chal. 'Drove them.' As the taskmasters exercised a more especial superintendance over the 'officers,' it is pro-

14 And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, *and* demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?

15 ¶ Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?

16 There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us,

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bable that the latter are to be understood by the expletive 'them' in this connexion. This appears still more obvious in comparing the next verse. ——¶ *Fulfil your works*, your *daily tasks*. Heb. דבר יום ביומו *debar yom beyomo, the matter of a day in his day*. Gr. τα καθηκοντα καθ' ἡμεραν, *the things appropriate to every day*.

14. *The officers of the children of Israel*. That is, not so much the officers that were *over* the children of Israel, but the officers that were by birth *of* the children of Israel. Accordingly the Gr. has, 'The scribes of the lineage of the sons of Israel.'——¶ *Were beaten*, and *demanded*. Heb. יכו לאמר *yukku lemor, were beaten, saying*. 'This is quite oriental. We need only allude to China, which has aptly been said to be governed by the stick. In Persia also the stick is in continual action. Men of all ranks and ages are continually liable to be beaten. It is by no means a rare occurrence for the highest and most trusted persons in the state, in a moment of displeasure or caprice in their royal master, to be handed over to the beaters of carpets, who thrash them with their sticks as if they were dogs. The same practice descends through all ranks; and it has often made the writer's heart ache to see respectable, and even venerable white-bearded men chastised by the menials and messengers of great persons, on their own account, with a brutality which would in this country subject a man to judicial punishment if exercised upon his ass or horse. Thus, beating comes to be regarded by all as among the common evils to which life is incident. Instances are mentioned of persons who, being wealthy, and knowing that attempts would be made to extort money from them by beating, have inured themselves, by self-inflicted blows, to bear the worst without being shaken. The consequence of all this is, that personal chastisement is in those countries not considered a disgrace, but simply a misfortune, limited to the pain inflicted, or to the degree of displeasure on the part of a superior which it may be understood to indicate. A great minister of state, who was beaten yesterday, does not hold his head less erect, and is not less courted or respected to-day, if he still retains his place and influence at court; and if his great master condescends, on second thoughts, to invest his bruised person with a robe of honor, and to speak a few words of kindness or compliment, the former punishment is considered by all parties to be more than adequately compensated.'—*Pict. Bib.*

15. *Then the officers came and cried unto Pharaoh*, &c. Supposing perhaps that this rigor had been imposed upon them by the task-masters, without Pharaoh's order, and therefore having hope of obtaining redress. But, alas! theirs was a case of which it might well be said in the language of the preacher, Ecc. 1. 1, 'I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.'

16. *The fault is in thine own people* Heb. חטאת עמך *hattath ammeka, thy*

Make brick: and behold, thy servants *are* beaten; but the fault *is* in thine own people.

17 But he said, Ye *are* idle, *ye are* idle: therefore ye say, Let us go, *and* do sacrifice to the LORD.

18 Go therefore now, *and* work: for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

19 And the officers of the children of Israel did see *that* they *were* in evil *case*, after it was said, Ye shall not minish *aught* from your bricks of your daily task.

people has sinned, or *done wrong*; or considering חַטֹּאתֵ a noun, *this is the sin of thy people*. The true meaning of the clause is not easily determined, as it is by no means obvious whether the phrase 'thy people' is to be referred to the Israelites or to the Egyptians. Those who adopt the former construction suppose the Israelites are called Pharaoh's people in order to work upon his compassion. But even in this case there is some discrepancy of interpretation. The words may be understood as a complaint of the officers that *they* were beaten, though *the people* (the Israelites) were the offenders, if any. On another, and on the whole a better construction, the sense will be; 'Behold thy servants are beaten, and yet the fault really lies at the door of thine own people (the Egyptians), who refuse to furnish them straw.' According to this the Chal. has, 'Thy people sinneth against them.' Leclerc, however, intimates that the phrase, 'the fault is in thine own people,' is equivalent to saying the fault is charged, imputed, to thine own people (the Israelites), and punishment inflicted upon them accordingly, though with vast injustice. This is somewhat countenanced by the Gr. Syr. and Vulg. which all render substantially, 'Thou injurest thy people,' i. e. the Israelites. We are still left in some degree of suspense as to the true import.

17, 18. *But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle*, &c. Thus affording a sample of the grossest tyranny, which generally thinks it sufficient to answer reasonable complaints by redoubled abuse and crimination, and by increasing the burdens which call them forth. To a certain extent indeed there was ground for Pharaoh's words; that is to say, they recognize the fact, that being idle is oftentimes the occasion of indulging vain and evil thoughts, and cherishing visionary projects. Had it been true, as he professed to think, that the Israelites had not work enough to do, nothing would have been more likely than that they should have devised some such excursion as he here charges upon them, under the plea of religious service. Thus the worldly wisdom and base insinuations of the king of Egypt, though grossly false and injurious in the present case, may yet teach us the useful lesson, that increased diligence in our daily work is one of the best remedies for a roving imagination and ungovernable thoughts. Let those that suffer from such temptations set themselves diligently to work at some employment useful to man and honorable to God. The less time they allow their hands to be idle, the less will be the risk of their thoughts leading them astray.

19. *The officers—did see that they were in evil case.* Heb. בְּרַע *in evil.* Moses and Aaron are here made to experience the lot that sometimes befalls good men in the best of causes. Their well-meant efforts but increase the hardships they were intended to remedy. The mission which had not long before so exhilarated the minds of the people and filled them with eager anticipations of deliverance, now proves the occasion of new miseries and persecutions. Bad as their condition had been before the two brothers came among them with their promises and their wonderful

20 ¶ And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh:

21 [h] And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

22 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou *so* evil-entreated this people? why *is* it *that* thou hast sent me?

23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people: neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

[h] ch. 6. 9.

signs, it was not to be compared to the intolerable hardships which the vindictive despot, in consequence of this mission, laid upon them. For the sanctified invasion of his royal prerogative and the wound given to his pride, he avenges himself upon the bleeding shoulders of the poor vassals who could not redress themselves and who durst not complain.

20. *And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh.* They doubtless having stationed themselves at some convenient stand on the way-side, where they could speedily learn the result of the interview.

21. *The Lord look upon you,* &c. The crimination of Moses and Aaron on this occasion was clearly as unjust and unreasonable as that of Pharaoh had been well deserved. They had given the best evidence of their devotedness to the interests of their countrymen, and of their zeal for their emancipation, and yet, from the *accidental* issues of their enterprise, they are reproached as accessaries to their slavery. But some allowance is to be made for their rashness on the principle mentioned by the Preacher, that 'oppression will drive a wise man mad,' so that he shall speak unadvisedly with his lips, and sometimes mistake a true friend for a bitter enemy. But let public benefactors learn from this, that they must expect to be tried, not only by the malice of declared opponents, but also by the unjust and unkind reflections of those from whom they had a right to hope for better things.——¶ *Put a sword in their hands to slay us.* That is, give them a plausible pretext for destroying us. A proverbial expression.

22. *And Moses returned,* &c. Or rather perhaps 'turned unto the Lord,' i. e. mentally, for we can conceive of no *local* return expressed by the term. He was evidently unprepared for this issue of the transaction, though he had been assured by God himself, that Pharaoh would not, till driven to the utmost extremity, consent to the departure of the Israelites. While he could not but be grieved to the heart to perceive that his efforts to serve his brethren had only contributed to plunge them deeper in distress, yet he was doubtless strongly sensible of the wrong that was done to him by their keen reproaches. But instead of retorting upon them in terms of equal harshness, he has immediate recourse to God and to him he pours out his complaint in a pathetic expostulation.——¶ *Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people?* That is, why hast thou *suffered them to be so evilly treated,* as is evident from the tenor of the next verse. But as we have seen before, this is entirely according to prevailing usage in the Scripture to represent God as doing that which he sovereignly permits to be done. Thus the petition in the Lord's Prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is to be understood, not of any supposable direct and positive act on the part of God, but simply of *sufferance* and *permission:* 'Do not suffer us to be led into temptation.' Moses was evidently at a loss how to

CHAPTER VI.

THEN the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for [a] with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand [b] shall he drive them out of his land.

2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I *am* the LORD:

[a] ch. 3. 19.

[b] ch. 11. 1. & 12. 31, 33, 39.

reconcile the adverse providence with the promise and the commission which he had received. He had indeed been taught to anticipate Pharaoh's refusal to let the people go, but he was taken by surprise on finding their burdens increased. It seemed to him that his mission was utterly abortive, and that thus far not one step had been taken towards their deliverance. But guided by the light of his experience, and that of thousands of others in subsequent times, *we* can put a more discreet construction upon this apparently mysterious style of dispensation. To *us* it is not a strange spectacle to see the most merciful counsels of God ushered in by a train of events apparently the most disastrous; to see his dearest servants reduced to the utmost straits just when he is ready to appear for their deliverance; and to witness the best directed endeavors for men's conviction and conversion, but exasperating their corruptions, confirming their prejudices, hardening their hearts, and sealing them up under unbelief. This result is suffered to take place in infinite wisdom that we may learn to cease from man, and that the divine interpositions may be more endeared to the hearts of those that wait for them.

CHAPTER VI.

1. *Then the Lord said unto Moses*, &c. That is, in answer to the complaining tenor of his address mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter, to which this verse properly belongs. It is somewhat singular, indeed, that it should have been separated from it, for with this verse ends the fourteenth section, or Sabbath day's reading of the Law; a division very clearly marked in the Hebrew Scriptures.—The murmuring spirit in which Moses appealed to God might have been justly met by a stern rebuke. But in the tone of gentleness and kindness in which this answer is couched we read no reproach of the infirmity, not to say perverseness, which had appeared in Moses' language. Thus long-suffering and indulgent is the Father of mercies towards his offending children. By an emphatic repetition of the promise before given, Ex. 3. 20, he silences the complaints of his servant, and assures him not only of ultimate but speedy success in his embassy to the king.——¶ *Now shalt thou see.* Your seeing this result shall not long be delayed. The words perhaps imply a *tacit* reproof of his former incredulity; q. d. I perceive you are slow to believe what I assured you, ch. 3. 19, 20, I would do to Pharaoh. Therefore you shall very shortly have evidence that will convince you.——¶ *With a strong hand shall he let them go*, &c. The 'strong hand' here mentioned is to be understood both of God and of Pharaoh. Pharaoh should by the sudden exercise of his kingly power and with great urgency send them forth out of Egypt; but to this he should himself be compelled by the 'strong hand' of God put forth in the terrific judgments of the plagues. The language of the promise, it will be observed, becomes more intense in the final clause. He shall not only be brought at last to *consent* to the departure of Israel, but shall be impelled himself by the pressure of the divine judgments to *urge* and *hasten* it with the utmost vehemence.

2. *And God spake unto Moses*, &c. Whether this is to be regarded as a

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by *the name of* [c] God Almighty, but by my name [d] JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

[c] Gen. 17 1. & 35. 11. & 48. 3.

[d] ch. 3. 14. Ps. 68. 4. & 83. 18. John 8. 58. Rev. 1. 4.

continuation of the address commenced in the preceding verse, or whether it was spoken to Moses on some subsequent occasion, is not easily determined. However this may be, the drift of the words is undoubtedly to show the sure foundation on which the fulfilment of the promise of deliverance rested. To this end he begins by declaring himself under the significant name of 'Jehovah,' by which he designed hereafter to be more especially recognized as the covenant God of their race. Hitherto the august title of 'Lord God Almighty' (El Shaddai) had been that with which they had been most familiar, and which had afforded the grand sanction and security to all his promises. In their various wanderings, weaknesses, and distresses, they had been encouraged to trust in a Being *omnipotent* to protect them, *all-sufficient* to supply their wants. But their posterity were henceforth to know him by another name, under a new character, even the incommunicable name 'Jehovah,' which denotes eternal unchangeable self-existence; deriving nothing from any, but conferring upon all, life, and breath, and all things; who is above all, through all, and in all; 'the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.' This glorious name he puts significantly in contrast with that by which he was known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in order to minister to his people a more abundant ground of hope and confidence.

3. *By my name* JEHOVAH *was I not known to them.* Gr. 'My name 'Lord' I did not manifest unto them.' Chal. 'My name 'Adonai' I showed not.' A twofold mode of interpretation divides into two classes the great mass of commentators upon this passage. (1.) It is maintained by some that the words are to be understood in their most exact and literal import, as teaching that the name 'Jehovah' was utterly unknown to the ancient patriarchs, and was first revealed to Moses at the burning bush, where, when he asked the name which he should announce to Israel, God declared himself by the sacred denomination 'I am that I am,' which is of the same origin and import with 'Jehovah,' and said moreover of the title 'Jehovah,' 'this is my *name* for ever, and this is my *memorial* unto all generations.' The advocates of this opinion, in answer to the objection that the name in question must have been known long before this, as it occurs in repeated instances in the course of the book of Genesis, reply, that as there is no evidence that the book of Genesis was written till after the divine appearance at Horeb, when this title was first revealed, the mere fact of Moses' making use of the name 'Jehovah' in that book is no sufficient proof that the name was known to those of whom he writes, any more than his mention of a place called 'Dan' in the time of Abraham, Gen. 14. 14, proves that the place was at that time known by this name, whereas it was then called 'Laish.' They contend farther, that as Moses wrote for the benefit of those of his own age and their posterity, it was specially fitting, that in writing the history of the Israelitish race from its earliest period, he should proleptically employ that peculiar name by which the Most High would be known as *their God*, the very same God who brought them out of Egypt, and who, a little before that deliverance, had made this his name known to them as that by which he would especially be called in memory of that great event. As to the passages where the patriarchs are re-

presented as expressly addressing the Lord by his title 'Jehovah,' as for instance, Gen. 15. 2, these, they say, are corrupted in the original text, and that later writers have substituted 'Jehovah' for 'Elohim' or 'Adonai,' which Moses undoubtedly wrote, and this hypothesis, it must be confessed, is somewhat favored by the variation of several of the ancient versions from the present Hebrew reading. See Geddes' Critical Remarks on this passage, who observes, that 'if the name 'Jehovah' were known before it was here communicated to Moses, and were the common appellation of the God of the patriarchs, the question of Moses, Ex. 3. 13, was needless, was impertinent; for God had before told him, v. 6, that he was 'the God of his (Moses') fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' It is clear then that Moses, by asking, what was the name of this same God of his fathers, knew not that he had any particular name; and that particular 'Jehovah' is now, for the first time, made known as the peculiar God of the Israelitic nation.' These are the principal arguments adduced in favor of the first hypothesis. (2.) Others, and we think for better reasons, understand the words as implying, not that the literal name 'Jehovah' was unknown to the ancient fathers who preceded Moses, but that its true, full, and complete import—its force, burden, and pregnant significancy, was not before known; whereas now and hereafter, the chosen people should come to understand this august name, not in the letter merely, but in the actual realization of all which it implied. The name 'Jehovah,' as before remarked, natively denotes not only God's eternal existence, but also his unchangeable truth and omnipotent power, which give being to his promises by the actual performance of them. Now, although Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had received promises, yet they had not enjoyed the things promised. They believed in these things, but they had not lived to see the actual accomplishment of them; they had not experimentally known them. The time, however, was now come, when God was to be known by his name 'Jehovah,' in the doing of what he had before decreed, and the fulfilling of what he had before promised. Accordingly in the words immediately following, which may be regarded as exegetical of the title under consideration, God goes on to assure them that he will make good his promise by establishing his covenant. Agreeably to this mode of interpretation it appears from other passages that God is said to make himself known under the high designation of 'Jehovah' by bringing to pass the grand predicted events of his providence. Thus, Ex. 7. 5, 'And that the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt.' Again, v. 17, 'Thou shalt know that I am Jehovah; for I will strike with the rod that is in thine hand upon the rivers, and they shalt be turned into blood.' Ezek. 28. 22, 'And they shall know that I am the Lord (Jehovah) when I shall have executed judgments in her and shall be sanctified in her.' It may be observed, moreover, that the Lord is not called 'Jehovah' till after he had finished the work of creation, Gen. 2. 4; and in like manner Christ, having fulfilled all things pertaining to our redemption, which is the new creation, manifested himself under the same significant name, not in its letter but in its interpretation, when he declared himself, Rev. 1. 8, 17, 18, to be 'the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, the Lord who is, and who was, and who is to come, even the Almighty.' The words of Moses, therefore, it is contended, are not to be understood as an *absolute* but a *comparative* negative; for that the literal name 'Jehovah' was known to the patriarchs, is indubitable, from the fol

4 [e] And I have also established my covenant with them, [f] to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.

5 And [g] I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage: and I have remembered my covenant.

6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, [h] I *am* the LORD, and [i] I

[e] Gen. 15. 18. & 17. 4, 7. [f] Gen. 17. 8. & 28 4. [g] ch. 2. 24. [h] ver. 2, 8, 29. [i] ch. 3. 17. & 7. 4. Deut. 26. 8. Ps. 81. 6. & 136. 11, 12.

will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will [k] redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments:

7 And I will [l] take you to me for a people, and [m] I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God, which bringeth you out [n] from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

[k] ch. 15. 13. Deut. 7. 8. 1 Chron. 17. 21. Neh. 1. 10. [l] Deut. 4. 20. & 7. 6. & 14. 2. & 26. 18. 2 Sam. 7. 24. [m] Gen. 17. 7, 8. ch. 29. 45, 46. Deut. 29. 13. Rev. 21. 7. [n] ch. 5. 4, 5. Ps. 81. 6.

lowing passages; Gen. 9. 26, Noah in his benediction of Shem says, 'Blessed be the Lord (Jehovah) God of Shem.' Gen. 15. 2, 'And Abraham said, Lord (Jehovah or Jehovih) God, what wilt thou give me?' Gen. 22. 14, 'And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh.' Certainly then the name 'Jehovah' must have been known to him. And so also to Isaac, Gen. 27, 7; and to Jacob, Gen. 28. 20, 21. Such comparative modes of speech are not unfrequent in the Scriptures. Thus Jer. 7. 22, 23, 'For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people;' i. e. I gave no commandment respecting *ritual* duties compared with the importance which I attached to *moral* duties. Otherwise it is evident that the language of the Most High militates with the recorded facts in the sacred history.

4. *I have also established my covenant with them.* Heb. הקמתי *hakimothi, have made to stand, have erected.*—— ¶ *To give them.* That is, not in their own persons, but in their posterity.

5. *I have remembered my covenant.* That is, I still bear in vivid remembrance my covenant entered into with Abraham, Gen. 15. 10. 11, and confirmed with solemn rites, in which I promised that I would judge that nation which should afflict his seed.

6, 7. *I am the Lord* (Jehovah), *and I will bring you out—will rid—will redeem—will take,* &c. These verbs are all, in the original, in the past instead of the future tense, denoting the *absolute certainty* of the accomplishment of the things promised, though for the present they were merely in futurition. But where God becomes a covenant 'Jehovah' to any soul or any people, the unfailing effect is to put his every promise into being, and it should not be forgotten that in Christ, under the Gospel, he becomes emphatically such to his church. Here the precious and glorious titles 'El Shaddai' and 'Jehovah,' *power* and *performance,* are sweetly combined in the person of him in whom the promises are all yea and amen.—— ¶ *With a stretched-out arm.* The word here rendered 'stretched-out,' may also be rendered 'lifted up,' or 'high,' as it is in fact by the Chal. and Latin Vulgate. The expression is borrowed from the circumstance of men's *stretching out* and *lifting up* their arms and hands with a view to strike their enemies with greater force. In order to which, it was usual in those Eastern countries

8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did [o] swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I *am* the LORD.

9 ¶ And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: [p] but they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

11 Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.

[o] Gen. 15. 18. & 26. 3. & 23. 13. & 35. 12.

[p] ch. 5. 21.

where their outer garments were of a loose and flowing kind, to fling them aside that they might not hinder or weaken the effect of the intended blow. It is in allusion to this that the expression 'making bare his holy arm,' is applied to the Most High, Is. 54. 10, in speaking of the inflictions of his wrath upon his enemies.

8. *Concerning the which I did swear to give it.* Heb. נשאתי את ידי *nasathi eth yadi, have lifted up my hand;* an expression taken from the common custom of elevating the hand to heaven when taking an oath. Dan. 12. 7, 'And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he *held up his right hand* and his left hand unto heaven, and *sware*, &c.' See Deut. 32. 40. Is. 62. 8.

9. *They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and from cruel bondage.* Heb. מקצר רוח *mikkotzer ruah, for shortness, or straitness of spirit.* That is, from extreme dejection and discouragement of soul, mingled with irritation and impatience. That this is the force of the original will appear from the usage in the following passages. Prov. 14. 29, 'He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is *hasty of spirit* (Heb. קצר רוח *ketzar ruah*) exalteth folly.' Job, 21. 4, 'And if it were so, why should not my spirit be *troubled* (Heb. תקצר *tiktzar, shortened*).' Numb. 21. 4, 'And the soul of the people was much *discouraged* (Heb. תקצר *shortened*) by reason of the way.' Judg. 16. 16, 'And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was *vexed* (Heb. תקצר *shortened*) unto death.' The Gr. renders it 'from feeble-mindedness,' the same word in effect and nearly in form as that which occurs, 1 Thes. 5. 14, 'Comfort the *feeble-minded*.' It is to this period probably that allusion is had, Ex. 14. 12, 'Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians, for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness;' which words in the Samaritan version are inserted in this place. To such a pitch of disheartening anguish had their sufferings wrought them that they chose to have all farther proceedings relative to their deliverance stayed. So heavy was their affliction, and so grievously had they been of late disappointed, that they can neither believe nor hope any longer; and the message now delivered by Moses was like a charming song upon the ear of a deaf or dead man. So strongly does a sense of wretchedness oppose the cordial reception of promises and encouragements. Even the comforts to which they are entitled, and which God has expressly provided for them, do the disconsolate put far from them under the pressure of their griefs. 'To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not.' Is. 28. 12.

10, 11. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, &c. The narrative proceeds to inform us with what still farther indulgence

12 And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have [q] not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, [r] who *am* of uncircumcised lips?

13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and gave them

[q] ver. 9.

[r] ver. 30. ch. 4. 10. Jer. 1. 6.

God treated the backwardness of his people to welcome the tidings of deliverance. He still moved forwards in his measures for their relief, as if he heard not or heeded not their unbelieving complaints, and remonstrances, and groans. That perverseness which would a thousand times have wearied out all human forbearance, is still graciously borne with by the long-suffering of heaven. But that which is mercy to Israel is wrath to Pharaoh, although the punishment which is ripening even for him is not to be inflicted without farther warnings. When the Lord is about to visit with judgments, we see him advancing as with slow and reluctant steps. On the contrary, when misery is to be relieved, benefits conferred, or sins forgiven, the blessing makes haste as it were, to spend itself upon its objects. But when the wicked are to be dealt with, justice seems to regret the necessity under which it is laid to maintain itself, and the sinner is not destroyed till the equity of his condemnation is manifest, and every thing around him calls for vengeance.

12. *And Moses spake before the Lord*, &c. It would seem that Moses had caught, in some measure, the spirit of despondency which reigned among his brethren. He speaks as one discouraged and timidly shrinking from what appears to him a hopeless service. Reasoning from the less to the greater, he is ready to conclude the cause to be desperate. If the Israelites themselves, who were so deeply interested in the burden of his message, turned a deaf ear to it, how little ground had he to hope for a hearing from Pharaoh? Would he not, in the pride and insolence of his spirit, spurn a message which required him to bow down his loftiness and humbly submit to the authority of a Being whom he did not acknowledge, and in so doing to honor a people whom he despised? More especially was he led to distrust his success when he called to mind his own infirmity in speaking This objection God had indeed sufficiently overruled on a former occasion, but in the depth of his dejection he pleads it again, forgetting the sufficiency of grace to overcome the defects of nature. In these circumstances, with a leader disheartened and broken down in spirit and a people sunk in utter despondency, what hope remained of deliverance to Israel, had not God himself taken the accomplishment of the whole work into his own hands? But his strength is made perfect in man's weakness.——¶ *Who am of uncircumcised lips.* Chal. 'Of an heavy speech.' Gr. αλογος, *without speech.* As among the Jews the circumcision of any part denoted its perfection, so on the other hand uncircumcision was used to signify its defectiveness or inaptitude to the purposes for which it was designed. Thus the prophet says of the Jews, Jer. 6. 10, that 'their ear was uncircumcised,' and adds the explanation of it, 'because they cannot hearken.' Again, ch. 9. 26, he tells us that 'the house of Israel were uncircumcised in heart,' i. e. would not understand and learn their duty. In like manner 'uncircumcised lips' in the passage before us must mean a person who was a bad speaker and wanting eloquence. Syr. 'Mine is a stammering tongue.'

13. *The Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge*, &c. Aaron is here again joined in commission with Moses, and the debate

a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

14 ¶ These *be* the heads of their fathers' houses: [s] The sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these *be* the families of Reuben.

15 [t] And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these *are* the families of Simeon.

16 ¶ And these *are* the names of [u] the sons of Levi, according to

[s] Gen. 46. 9. 1 Chron. 5. 3. [t] 1 Chron. 4. 24. Gen. 46. 10. [u] Gen. 46. 11. Numb. 3. 17. 1 Chron. 6. 1, 16.

their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi *were* an hundred thirty and seven years.

17 [x] The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families.

18 And [y] the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath *were* an hundred thirty and three years.

19 And [z] the sons of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these *are* the families of Levi, according to their generations.

[x] 1 Chron. 6. 17. & 23. 7. [y] Numb. 26. 57. 1 Chron. 6. 2, 18. [z] 1 Chron. 6. 19. & 23. 21.

ended by the interposition of the divine *authority*. A solemn *charge* is given to both which, upon their allegiance, they are required to execute with all possible expedition and fidelity. 'Where the word of a king is, there is power,' and the repetition of baffled arguments is suitably cut short by the voice of the Most High speaking in majesty. It is not clear that the words of this verse are to be understood as the answer to what Moses had said in the verse before. They seem to be rather a brief recapitulation of what had been said in the three preceding verses. As he was about to interrupt the thread of the narrative by the insertion of a genealogical table, he here repeats the general fact of Moses and Aaron having received a charge to go into the presence of Pharaoh and renew their demand of the dismission of the people. The historian thus indicates the posture of things at that particular stage of the business where the continuity of his story is broken.

14. *These be the heads*, &c. Gr. αρχηγοι, *chiefs, captains, governors*. 'Their houses,' i. e. the houses of Moses and Aaron. The design of introducing this genealogical record in its present connexion, is to point out distinctly the stock and lineage of Moses and Aaron. As one of these was to be the great Legislator and Prophet, and the other the High Priest of the peculiar people, it might be of very great importance in after ages to have their true descent authenticated beyond a doubt.——¶ *The sons of Reuben*, &c. As Reuben and Simeon were elder than Levi, from whom Moses and Aaron derived their pedigree, it seemed to be proper to state the rank which their progenitor held, in the order of birth, among the sons of Jacob.

16. *According to their generations*. The force of this expression may, perhaps, be better conceived by its being paraphrased thus: 'These are the names of the sons of Levi, *viewed in connexion with the respective lines of descendants proceeding from them*.'——¶ *The years of the life of Levi*, &c. Levi was four years elder than Joseph, consequently he was 43 when he came into Egypt, Joseph being then 39; was 114 at the death of Joseph, whom he survived 23 years; lived after coming into Egypt 94 years, and died 41 years before the birth of Moses, and 121 before the exode from Egypt. His age is per-

20 And [a] Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram *were* an hundred and thirty and seven years.

21 ¶ And [b] the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri.

22 And [c] the sons of Uzziel; Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri.

23 And Aaron took him Elisheba daughter of [d] Amminadab, sister of Naashon to wife; and she bare him [e] Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

24 And the [f] sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these *are* are the families of the Korhites.

[a] ch. 2. 1, 2. Numb. 26. 59. [b] Numb. 16. 1. 1 Chron. 6. 37, 38. [c] Lev. 10. 4. Numb. 3. 30. [d] Ruth 4. 19, 20. 1 Chron. 2. 10. Matt. 1. 4. [e] Lev. 10. 1. Numb. 3. 2. & 26. 60. 1 Chron. 6. 3. & 24. 1. [f] Numb. 26. 11.

25 And Eleazar, Aaron's son, took him *one* of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and [g] she bare him Phinehas: these *are* the heads of the fathers of the Levites, according to their families.

26 These *are* that Aaron and Moses, [h] to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their [i] armies.

27 These *are* they which [k] spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, [l] to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these *are* that Moses and Aaron.

28 ¶ And it came to pass on the day *when* the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt,

[g] Numb. 25. 7, 11. Josh. 24. 33. [h] ver. 13. [i] ch. 7. 4. & 12. 17, 51. Numb. 33. 1. [k] ch. 5. 1, 3. & 7. 10. [l] ver. 13. ch. 32. 7. & 33. 1. Ps. 77. 20.

haps expressly stated in order to afford aid toward settling the precise time of the fulfilment of the prophecy made to Abraham, Gen. 15. 13. It is moreover worthy of notice, that the promise made to Abraham, Gen. 15. 16, that the Israelites should be delivered out of Egypt 'in the fourth generation' was strictly fulfilled. Moses was the son of Amram, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Jacob. Jacob went down into Egypt, and Moses was in the fourth generation from him.

20. *Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife.* It is obvious that in giving this genealogical record Moses is very far from being prompted by a vain-glorious wish to laud his ancestry; for he not only inserts in the list the names of those whose characters disgraced it, but he openly declares himself to be the offspring of a connexion which was afterwards expressly forbidden under the law, and which was probably even now regarded as doing some violence to the dictates of nature. Comp. Lev. 18. 12. Numb. 26. 59. We may learn, however, from the circumstances of the parentage of Moses and Aaron, that the evil or equivocal conduct of progenitors does not always avail to preclude their having a seed which shall stand high in the favor of God.

23. *Aaron took him Elisheba.* Gr. Ελιζαβετ, *Elizabeth.* She was of the tribe of Judah, being sister to Naashon, a prince of that tribe. While Moses thus dwells particularly on the genealogy of Aaron, he modestly passes over his own in silence. Had he been a man of ambition, or his institutions been of his own devising, he would never have given this precedence to his brother's family over his own.

26. *These are that Aaron and Moses.* Heb. הוא אהרן ומשה *hu Aharon u Mosheh, this is that Aaron and Moses.* The words of this and the following verse are merely a more minute specification of the persons of Moses and Aaron, without being in the least designed as a note of self-commendation. We see rather a tacit intimation of the

29 That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [m] I *am* the LORD: [n] speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee.

30 And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, [o] I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

[m] ver. 2. [n] ver. 11. ch. 7. 2. [o] ver. 12. ch. 4. 10.

distinguishing grace of heaven in raising up two individuals from the humblest ranks of life, and entrusting them with the dignified service of delivering Israel from the hand of Pharaoh. —— ¶ *According to their armies.* That is, their tribes, now grown so numerous as to form each an army. There seems to be intended also an oblique antithesis between these armies of Israel, and the two inconsiderable men who were appointed to lead them; as if he would insinuate that they were called to a work to which they were in themselves totally inadequate, and one which they could never have performed without being miraculously aided and endowed from heaven.

29. *Saying, I am the Lord* (Jehovah). Nothing more could be really needed to countervail the fears and misgivings of Moses than this assurance. The name 'Jehovah,' carries enough in its import to support his ministers in their severest trials and most arduous labors.

CHAPTER VII.

1. *I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.* Heb. נְתַתִּיךָ אֱלֹהִים *nathattika elohim, I have given thee a god*; i. e. set, ordained, appointed; according to a common usage of the original נתן *to give*, of which see Note on Gen. 1. 17. Chal. 'I have set thee a prince or master (רב *rab*).' Arab. 'I have made thee a lord.' See Note on Ex. 4. 10. Moses was to be God's representative in this affair, as magistrates are called *gods*

CHAPTER VII.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee [a] a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be [b] thy prophet.

2 Thou [c] shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he

[a] ch. 4. 16. Jer. 1. 10. [b] ch. 4. 16. [c] ch. 4. 15.

because they are God's vicegerents. He was authorized to speak and act in God's name, doing that which was above the ordinary power of nature, and commissioned to demand obedience from a sovereign prince. —— ¶ *Aaron shall be thy prophet.* Chal. 'Thine interpreter.' See Note on Gen. 28. 7. 'A man who is afraid to go into the presence of a king, or a governor, or a great man, will seek an interview with the minister, or some principal character; and should he be much alarmed, it will be said, 'Fear not, friend; I will make you *as a god* to the king.' 'What! are you afraid of the collector? fear not; you will be *as a god* to him.' 'Yes, yes, that upstart was once much afraid of the great ones; but now he is like a *god* among them.' *Roberts.* Moses himself was to be an oracle, and Aaron a mouth, to Pharaoh. Aaron was to be to Moses what Moses himself was to God. The Most High does not scruple to clothe his humblest servants with a kind of divinity when he would make them oracles to his people or instruments of wrath to his enemies.

2. *Thou shalt speak,* &c. That is, to Aaron. When men speak by God's command they are to keep back no part of his message. Although the name of Aaron is not always expressly mentioned in connexion with that of Moses throughout the ensuing narrative, yet it is to be inferred, from the charge now given, that the two brothers uniformly went into the presence of Pharaoh together.

send the children of Israel out of his land.

3 And [d] I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and [e] multiply my [f] signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, [g] that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, *and* my people the children

[d] ch. 4. 21. [e] ch. 11. 9. [f] ch. 4. 7 [g] ch. 10. 1. & 11. 9.

3. *I will harden Pharaoh's heart*, &c. As in the former instance, ch. 4. 15, 21, God announced to Moses the result, of which his message would be the *occasion*, not the *cause*, so here also he expressly informs him that the course which he should pursue with Pharaoh would but serve to 'harden his heart,' and set him with more obstinacy than ever against letting Israel go. The consequence would be, that it would become necessary to display before the Egyptians multiplied and still more striking exhibitions of the divine majesty and power.——¶ *My wonders*. Heb. מופתי *mophethai*. The original comes from the root רפה *yaphah*, to *persuade*. It therefore properly implies a *persuasive fact*, *event*, or *sign*, effected to produce conviction and to lead to faith and obedience, whether the wonder be strictly miraculous or not.

4. *But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you*. Heb. ולא ישמע *lo yishma*, *will not hear*; i. e. will not obediently give heed to you. The received mode of rendering, 'shall not hearken,' puts upon the passage an *imperative* air which the original does not warrant, or at least require. It is merely a *predictive* sentence.——¶ *That I may lay mine hand*. Heb. ונתתי ידי *ve-nathatti eth yadi*, *and I will give mine hand*. Chal. 'And will lay the stroke of my strength (i. e. my powerful plague) upon the land of Egypt.'——¶ *Bring forth mine armies*, and *my people*. Rather, according to the original, 'Mine hosts, even my of Israel, out of the land of Egypt, [h] by great judgments.

5 And the Egyptians [i] shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I [k] stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

6 And Moses and Aaron [l] did as the LORD commanded them, so did they.

[h] ch. 6. 6. [i] ver. 17. ch. 8. 22. & 14. 4, 18. Ps. 9. 16. [k] ch. 3. 20. [l] ver. 2.

people,' as the copulative 'and' is wanting.

5. *The Egyptians shall know*, &c. The great end at which God aims by his penal judgments upon the world, is to make himself known to the children of men. His messengers may be despised, contradicted, and opposed, but it should be a satisfaction to them to be assured that the divine word shall so far prosper in that whereunto it is sent, that *God shall finally be glorified* in the issue of their embassy. They shall not in the end have reason to say that they have labored in vain, though they would rejoice to have been made the instruments of mercies rather than of judgments.

6. *Moses and Aaron did*, &c. These words contain merely a general affirmation that Moses and Aaron, according to what was required of them, delivered all the words, and performed all the miracles which are afterward recorded in their various minute details. The statement is not prompted by a spirit of self-complacent boasting, but as Moses had before frankly recorded his sinful backwardness to engage in the Lord's service, it was no more than proper that he should pay this tribute to his subsequent prompt fidelity. It is in effect the same testimony which is given by the Psalmist, Ps. 105. 28, 'They (Moses and Aaron) rebelled not against his word,' provided this was spoken of Moses and Aaron, which may be doubted. See Note on Ex. 9. 14—16.

7 And Moses *was* [m] fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

8 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying,

9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, [n] Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, [o] Take thy rod, and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it shall become a serpent.

10 ¶ And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so [p] as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it [q] became a serpent.

[m] Deut. 29. 5. & 31. 2. & 34. 7. Acts 7. 23, 30. [n] Isai. 7. 11. John 2. 18. & 6. 30.

[o] ch. 4. 2, 17. [p] ver. 9. [q] ch. 4. 3.

7. *Moses was fourscore years old*, &c. They both therefore had, in the eyes of their countrymen, all the venerableness attached to age, and their years would inspire confidence that they would do nothing rashly. Pharaoh also might be expected to consider with more respect a message delivered by men of such a reverend and patriarchal demeanor. At the same time, it went to display the divine hand more illustriously, that two such grey headed old men, should be selected to manage a business of such an immensely arduous nature; as no degree of vigor of constitution could prevent them from feeling and evincing *some* of the infirmities of age.

9. *Show a miracle for you.* Heb. תנו לכם מופת *tenu lakem mophith, give a miracle for yourselves.* The tone is *supposed* to be supercilious and haughty, as though it were much more important for *their* sakes than for *his* that a miracle should be wrought. It is taken for granted however that Pharaoh would demand a *miraculous* testimony in proof of their commission from God. The implication involved in this is plainly, that such a demand is in itself *reasonable;* and although Pharaoh probably had no desire to be convinced, but was rather in hopes that no miracle would be wrought, and thus his disobedience be justified to himself, yet it is obvious that the Scriptures go all along on the admitted principle that the performance *of miracles is the true seal of a divine commission.* See on this subject the Note on Ex. 4. 5. Those who profess to speak to men in the name of God may expect to have their authority sifted, and though they may not now be able to silence cavils by the exhibition of miraculous power, yet they may, by a pure doctrine and a blameless life, leave objectors without excuse.——¶ *And it shall become a serpent.* Heb. והיה לתנין *yehi letannin, it shall be to a serpent;* i. e. a large serpent, a dragon (Gr. δρακων, *a dragon*). On the import of the original word תנין *tannin*, see Note on Gen. 1. 21. The word here is not the same with that which occurs ch. 4. 3, though, in some instances, probably synonymous with it. It is not unlikely that the rod was changed into a *crocodile*, an animal abounding in Egypt, and apparently spoken of, in some cases, as an emblem of its persecuting rulers. Ps. 74. 13, 'Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength (the Red Sea): thou brakest the heads of the *dragons* (Heb. תנינים *tanninim*) in the waters;' i. e. thou destroyedst the Egyptian power. See also Ezek. 29. 3.

10. *Aaron cast down his rod*, &c. Though not expressly asserted, yet it is to be presumed, that a sign was demanded by Pharaoh. The command to Moses and Aaron to work the miracle was predicated on the contingency of Pharaoh's asking it, and we must presume that this condition occurred. But the sacred writers study the extremest brevity upon all points that do not positively *require* specification. Up to this point Moses and Aaron had simply

11 Then Pharaoh also [r] called the wise men, and [s] the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also [t] did in like manner with their enchantments.

[r] Gen. 41. 8. [s] 2 Tim. 3. 8.

[t] ver. 22. ch. 8. 7, 18.

delivered their *message*, their *instructions*, to Pharaoh; the time had now come for them to produce their *credentials*.

11. *Pharaoh called the wise men.* Heb. חכמים *hăkamim*, from חכם *hakam, to be wise, to act wisely;* and applied in its adjective form by the orientals to those that practised magical arts and incantations, from their being supposed to *know* more, to be *wiser*, than the mass of men. The Gr. here has σοφιστας, *sophists;* i. e. philosophers, or professors of science. —— ¶ *Sorcerers.* Heb. מכשפים *mekashshephim*, from כשף *kashaph, to use inchantments for magical purposes;* equivalent to *sorcerers, jugglers, wizards.* Gr. φαρμακους, *conjurors by drugs.* ——¶ *Magicians.* Heb. חרטמים *hartummim.* On this word see Note on Gen. 41. 8. It is here evidently used in a *general* sense, comprehending under it the *wise men* and the *sorcerers* mentioned above, from whom the *magicians* were not a different class. The Gr. renders the term variously by εξηγηται *interpreters* or *explainers* of something secret, επαοιδοι, *inchanters*, and φαρμακοι, *drug-sorcerers.* In the Lat. it is often explained by *genethliaci* or *sapientes nativitatum, casters-up of nativities*, and is joined with *astrologers* and *soothsayers*, Dan. 1. 20.—2. 10, 27.—4. 7.

Having thus defined, as well as we are able, the import of the original terms, two important questions naturally suggest themselves for consideration;—(1) What was Pharaoh's design in calling these magicians into his presence? and (2) What do we learn from the sacred text that they actually *did?* The subject is one which has been very largely discussed and very variously understood, and at best is encompassed with difficulties of no easy solution. One of the most elaborate and satisfactory of the numerous tractates to which this part of the Mosaic history has given rise, is that of Farmer in his 'Dissertation on Miracles,' a work which has supplied us with many important hints in the ensuing remarks.

First, as to Pharaoh's *design* in sending for the magicians, there is no good reason for supposing that the object was to engage the gods of Egypt to work miracles in *direct opposition* to the God of Israel, and thereby to invalidate Moses' divine commission. In that case they would obviously have endeavored to *counteract* the aim of Jehovah and not to *promote* it. Instead of joining with the God of the Hebrews in bringing down heavier judgments and adding to the direful plagues already inflicted, they would have sought to have had them diminished and removed. Instead of desiring them to turn more water into blood, they would have besought them to restore the corrupted waters to their natural state. Instead of entreating them to multiply frogs, their prayer would have been for them to be removed or destroyed, as it would certainly be as easy to do the one as the other. The fact seems to have been, that Pharaoh's first thought was that Moses was nothing more than a magician, and that he sent for *his* magicians in order to learn from them whether the sign given by Moses was truly supernatural, or only such as their art was able to accomplish. The question therefore was not whether the gods of Egypt were superior to the God of Israel, or whether evil spirits could perform greater miracles than those which Moses performed by the assistance of Jehovah; but whether the works of Moses were proper

proofs that the God of Israel was Jehovah, the only sovereign of nature, and consequently whether Moses was acting by his commission. This was to be determined by the result of their efforts to perform the same extraordinary acts as Moses did; and had they succeeded, the effect would have been the same as if Baal had answered his votaries by fire; it would have followed of course that Moses, whatever he might pretend, was a magician only, and not a divinely commissioned messenger, and also that Jehovah was not the only sovereign of nature. Having been summoned therefore for this purpose into the royal presence, the question arises,

Secondly, as to the true nature of the magicians' performances. Were they real miracles, and if so by what power effected? Or were they nothing more than dextrous feats of juggling or sleight of hand? On these points various opinions have been held, each supported by an array of reasoning more or less plausible. Some have supposed that the magicians were aided by evil spirits in the performance of the miracles; and that these spirits were allowed by God to exercise a supernatural power up to a certain point, when they were suddenly arrested and confounded in their impotency, and made to give a more signal triumph to the cause of Omnipotence and truth. But to this it is we think validly objected that the Scriptures, properly understood, never ascribe to evil spirits the power of working *real miracles*. Whatever wonders they may be capable of effecting, a *miracle* strictly so termed, invariably requires and implies a *divine interposition*, as otherwise it would be difficult to conceive how a miracle should be a proof of a commission from God. Others therefore have supposed that although the magicians pretended to have communication with evil spirits and employed their arts accordingly, yet that God was pleased to interpose in concurrence with their enchantments, and work a real miracle, contrary perhaps to their expectations; while yet his design was by working a still greater one on the side of Moses and Aaron, to show the *vast superiority* of his power over theirs. This they would infer of course when they saw for instance Aaron's rod swallowing up their own, and consequently both they and Pharaoh would be inexcusable in refusing to acknowledge the agency of Omnipotence. But to this again it may be replied, that the proof thus adduced was not absolutely conclusive to their minds, that no power but that of Jehovah could work miracles. How was the transformation of Moses' rod a demonstration of his being sent by Jehovah, when the magicians apparently produced the very same credentials of a supernatural ability? Nay, the magicians, in the first contest, if a real miracle was wrought on their side no matter by what power, would appear not only to have imitated, but to have exceeded Moses; having the advantage over him in the *number* of their miracles. For to human view they turned not only one rod into a serpent, which was all that Moses had hitherto done, but they turned their several rods into serpents. Now why was Moses to be credited on account of a single miracle, if it were contradicted and overborne by several miracles fully equal to it? After the conversion of the rods, it is true, Moses' serpent swallowed up those of the magicians; but this after victory, however splendid, could not retrieve the credit of the former defeat. It could not establish the validity of the proof, from the change of his rod, which he had appealed to in the beginning as a decisive testimony in favor of his claims. We seem therefore to be shut up to the necessity of seeking for a still more satisfactory solution of the difficulties involved in the case of the Egyptian magicians. Our conclusion, on the whole, is the same with that of Dr. Dwight, as

expressed in his 'Theology' (Serm. LX, on the Miracles of Christ), that the magicians wrought no miracles. All that they did was to busy themselves with *their enchantments*, by which every man now knows that, although the weak and credulous may be deceived, miracles cannot possibly be accomplished.

We proceed, therefore, to state the grounds of this interpretation, and in doing it we regret that, from its depending so entirely upon the idiomatic structure of the Hebrew, the mere English reader will not perhaps be able fully to appreciate its force. We will endeavor to make it, however, if not demonstrable, at least intelligible.—It is a canon of interpretation of frequent use in the exposition of the sacred writings, that verbs of action sometimes signify merely the *will* and *endeavor* to do the action in question. Thus Ezek. 24. 13, 'I have *purified* thee, and thou wast not purged;' i. e. I have endeavored, used means, been at pains, to purify thee. John 5. 44, 'How can ye believe which *receive* honor one of another;' i. e. endeavor to receive. Rom. 2. 4. 'The goodness of God *leadeth* thee to repentance;' i. e. endeavors or tends to lead thee. Amos, 9. 3, 'Though they be *hid* from my sight in the bottom of the sea;' i. e. though they aim to be hid. 1 Cor. 10. 33, 'I *please* all men;' i. e. endeavor to please. Gal. 5. 4, 'Whosoever of you are *justified* by the law;' i. e. seek and endeavor to be justified. Ps. 69. 4, 'They that *destroy* me are mighty;' i. e. that endeavor to destroy me. Eng. 'That *would* destroy me.' Acts, 7. 26, 'And *set them at one* again;' i. e. wished and endeavored. Eng. '*would* have set them.' The passage before us we consider as exhibiting a usage entirely analogous. 'They also did in like manner with their enchantments,' i. e. they endeavored to do in like manner; just as in ch. 8. 18, it is said, 'And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, *but they could not*;' the words being precisely the same in both instances. Adopting this construction, we suppose that the former clause of verse 12 should be rendered, 'For they cast down every man his rod, *that* they might become serpents;' which the Hebrew reader will perceive to be a rendering precisely parallel to that which occurs ch. 6. 11, 'Speak unto Pharaoh *that* he let the children of Israel go;' Heb. '*And* he shall let go.' So also ch. 7. 2, 'Shall speak unto Pharaoh, *that* he send;' Heb. '*And* he shall send.' The magicians cast down their rods that they might undergo a similar transmutation with that of Moses, but it is not expressly said that *were* so changed, and we therefore incline to place their discomfiture in the loss of their rods, those instruments with which they had vainly hoped to compete with Moses. If it be contended that there was some kind of change produced on the magicians' rods, but that it was effected by feats of juggling, or legerdemain, and amounted in fact merely to an optical illusion, we do not particularly object to this construction, inasmuch as it admits our main position, that there was no *real miracle* wrought by or through the magicians. Perhaps on the whole it may be considered as the most probable hypothesis; especially as the narrative does not require us to understand all these various incidents as having occurred at one and the same interview. It seems that it was *after* the miracle wrought upon Aaron's rod that the magicians were called for by Pharaoh, and as they would learn from the summons itself the object for which they were called into the royal presence, as well as the character of the miracle that had been wrought, they would of course have time to make all the necessary preparations for playing off an illusion upon the senses of the spectators by their *semblances of serpents*.

12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart that he hearkened not unto them; [u] as the LORD had said.

14 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, [x] Pharaoh's heart *is* hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.

15 Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water, and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come: and [y] the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.

16 And thou shalt say unto him, [z] The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, [a] that they may serve me in the wilderness: and behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear.

[u] ch. 4. 21. ver. 4. [x] ch. 8. 15. & 10. 1, 20, 27.

[y] ch. 4. 2, 3. & ver. 10. [z] ch. 3. 18. [a] ch. 3 12. 18. & 5. 1, 3.

13. *And he hardened Pharaoh's heart.* Heb. וירחזק לב פרעה *va-yehezak lĭb Pharoh, and the heart of Pharaoh waxed strong, or hardened itself.* The expression in the original is precisely the same with that which occurs v. 22, of this chapter, and is there rendered, 'And Pharaoh's heart was hardened.' Why it is translated differently here, it is not easy to say.

14. *Is hardened.* Heb. כבד *kabēd, is heavy;* an instance of the unhappy usage by which our translators have uniformly employed the word 'harden' to represent several different words in the original. See Note on Ex. 4. 21.

15. *Get thee unto Pharaoh,* &c. We here enter upon the account of the ten successive plagues, to which the Most High had recourse in order to humble and break the refractory spirit of Pharaoh. Hitherto a miracle had been wrought, but no judgment inflicted. The conversion of the rod into a serpent had given proof of the tremendous power with which God's messengers were armed, but no injury having ensued, no conviction or relenting had been produced. Another step was therefore now to be taken in the progress of the divine visitations. The rod was now to begin its *chastising* work, and though remaining unchanged to become *a rod of scorpions* to the whole nation. As if there were a probability that he would not be admitted into the presence-chamber, or room of state, where audience was usually given to embassadors, he is directed to meet him by the river's brink, whither he was in the habit of resorting in the morning, either to perform his ablutions or his devotions, or both; as there is clear evidence that the Nile was anciently deified as the source of the fertility of the soil of Egypt, and that it had its appointed priests, festivals, and sacrifices. Indeed at the present day, under the sterner system of the Moslem religion, the reverence entertained for the Nile exhibits a tendency towards the same superstitious regard, as it is called 'the Most Holy River,' and its benefits are still celebrated by a variety of religious rites. As this river was to be the subject of the first plague, Moses was ordered to meet Pharaoh on its banks and there, with the intimidating rod in his hand which had so recently triumphed over the rods of the magicians, to give him a new summons to surrender, and in case of a refusal to announce the coming judgment. He would thus have no possible pretence for ascribing the effect, when it came, to any other than the true cause. It was affording him, moreover, another fair opportunity to forego his obstinacy and comply with the divine mandate, for God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth.

17 Thus saith the LORD, in this [b] thou shalt know that I *am* the Lord: behold, I will smite with the rod that *is* in my hand upon the waters which *are* in the river, and [c] they shall be turned [d] to blood.

[b] ch. 5. 2. ver. 5.

[c] ch. 4. 9. [d] Rev. 16. 4, 6.

17. *In this shalt thou know*, &c. Heb. בזאת *bezoth*, *in* or *by this*; i. e. this miracle about to be wrought. Pharaoh had before, ch. 5. 2, contemptuously asked, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.' He was now to be instructed to his cost on this head.——¶ *I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand.* As these are probably to be considered the words of Jehovah himself they present a striking example of the phraseology by which an agent is said to do that which he commands or procures to be done. The smiting rod was said to be in God's hand, because it was in the hand of Moses who was acting by his orders and in his name. Thus, Hos. 8. 12, 'I have written to him the great things of my law;' i. e. have ordered or procured them to be written. Yet it is proper to observe that the Jewish and many Christian commentators consider these as more truly the words of Moses speaking in the name of God, whose representative he was expressly declared to be to Pharaoh, v. 1. The rod was literally in the hand of Aaron, but Moses, they contend, might properly say it was in *his* hand because he was principal in the affair and merely used the ministry of Aaron in performing the miraculous works. Compare Mark, 15. 45, 'And when he (Pilate) knew it of the centurion, he *gave* the body to Joseph;' with Mat. 27. 58, 'Then Pilate *commanded the body to be delivered*.' As the sense is plain, it is not very material to whom the words are most immediately referred. Throughout the transaction God, Moses, and Aaron acted in such entire concert that they are considered as one, though all the *efficiency* exerted is of course to be referred exclusively to Omnipotence.——¶ *They shall be turned to blood.* As precisely the same expression in the original occurs Joel, 3. 4, 'The moon shall be *turned into blood*,' where all that can be understood is that it should be *turned into the color of blood*, some have supposed that nothing more is meant in the present case than that the waters were to be made to assume a preternatural *red and blood-like color*. This, they intimate, may have been done by miraculously impregnating the water with some substance capable of producing that effect, and which should render it at the same time destructive to animal life. But the case is very different in regard to a solid and a fluid body; as also in respect to a highly figurative mode of speech appropriate to prophecy, and the language of simple historical narrative. As to the change of the moon, we perceive at once that nothing more than an *optical* illusion is the effect intended to be described; but in the case of the river, if the text declares it, no good reason can be assigned why the mass of waters should not be converted to *real blood* as well as to any other fluid substance, since it is an operation equally easy to Omnipotence, and since we can much more readily conceive of a river of blood becoming *putrescent* than of common water, which had merely undergone discoloration. We are constrained therefore to take the words in their literal sense as announcing that Pharaoh and his people should behold their delicious and venerated river become a vast rolling stream of blood, pure blood, no doubt florid and high-colored, exhibiting a spectacle which *they* could not contemplate, nor *we* conceive, without emotions of horror. But of the *actual miracle* the sequel informs us more particularly.

18 And the fish that *is* in the river shall die, and the river shall stink: and the Egyptians shall [e] loathe to drink of the water of the river.

19 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and [f] stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egpyt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood: and *that* there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *vessels of* wood, and in *vessels of* stone.

20 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he [g] lifted up the rod and smote the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the [h] waters that *were* in the river were turned into blood.

[e] ver. 24. [f] ch. 8. 5, 6, 16. & 9. 22. & 10. 12, 21. & 14. 21, 26.

[g] ch. 17. 5. [h] Ps. 78. 44. & 105. 29.

18. *The fish that is in the river shall die.* 'We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely,' said the murmuring Israelites in the wilderness, Num. 11. 5; from which it is obvious that fish constituted no small part of the food of the country. But the changing of the waters was to be the death of the fish, so that the means of satisfying hunger as well as of quenching thirst would be abridged to them.——¶ *Shall loathe to drink of the water.* Heb. נלאו לשתות *nilu lishtoth, shall be wearied to drink;* i. e. wearied by digging round about the river for water. The original comprehensively expresses both the distasteful loathesomeness of the bloody water and the trouble and pains to which they were subjected in obtaining that which was pure. Gr. 'They shall not be able to drink the water of the river.'

19. *Stretch out thine hand,* &c. The fearful plague was not to be confined to the river. By stretching out his arm, and waving his rod in different directions over the land, the judgment was to become, as it were, universal. The various branches of the Nile, the canals derived from it, the ponds and reservoirs, all were to exhibit the spectacle of the same hideous and nauseous transformation!——¶ *In* vessels of *wood and* in vessels of *stone.* Heb. 'In woods and in stones;' by which is probably meant not so much the vessels in domestic use, as the cisterns, tanks, and other larger receptacles constructed of wood or stone for the purpose of containing the water which run into them on the overflowing of the Nile. As they have no rain in Egypt, and the water of their wells is very bad, the river was their great dependence for water.

20. *And Moses and Aaron did so,* &c. The event answered to the prediction and the performance of Moses and Aaron. That noble river, the pride and ornament of their country, which alone gave fertility to its soil and beauty to its scenery, now no longer pours its native refreshing stream along its banks, but flows in thickened blood, casting up its perished inhabitants, and tainting the air with its noisome stench! In order to appreciate more justly the appalling nature of this judgment, we must bear in mind, not only the *fertilizing* properties of the Nile, but the deliciousness of its waters as a beverage. By the universal consent of all who have drank of this river, it is unrivalled in this respect by any waters in the world which are not medicinal. Such is its character now, and such doubtless it was then. How terrible the privation for a whole people to be thus deprived at once of the blessing and the luxury of such a river! But the event teaches us how easily an avenging God can not only cut off our most necessary supplies, but also convert our choicest comforts to our greatest

21 And the fish that *was* in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians [i]could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

22 [k]And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; [l]as the LORD had said.

23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.

24 And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river.

25 And seven days were fulfilled after that the LORD had smitten the river.

CHAPTER VIII.

AND the LORD, spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say

[i] ver. 18. [k] ver. 11. [l] ver. 3.

plagues. And not only so. We see in this judgment the marks of a twofold retribution; first, for idolatry, and secondly, for cruelty. The river of Egypt was the idol of Egypt. They vainly boasted that by reason of their river they were independent of the rains of heaven. They paid to that cherished stream the homage which was due to its Creator. They ascribed to it the blessings which they owed to him. It was fitting therefore that he should 'smite it in the seven streams thereof;' that he should make that a loathing, a scourge, and a curse, which they had made an idol. 'Men are sure to be punished most and soonest in that which they make a corrival with God.' *Bp. Hall.* But this was not all. It was a significant as well as a righteous plague. They had stained the waters of that river with the blood of the Hebrew innocents, and now he gave them blood to drink, for they were worthy, Rev. 16. 6. Its cruel lord is now punished by seeing its channel filled, from shore to shore, with one crimson tide! So signally are the instruments of sin often made the instruments of punishment!

22. *The magicians did so with their enchantments.* That is, as before, attempted to do so. It will be observed that nothing is said of the *effect* of the magicians' attempt to imitate this miracle. Whether they succeeded in multiplying the bloody fluid is not affirmed, though even if they did, it was evidently on so small a scale, as not to afford any plausible pretext for disparaging the unspeakably greater miracle of Moses. As Moses had already turned the running and standing waters of Egypt into blood, they could only procure small quantities by digging below the surface. But what was this compared with the *immensity* of the work wrought by Moses? Indeed the shallowness of their pretences was palpable in their proposing to show their skill by increasing an evil which was already intolerable. If they had had any confidence in their own art they would rather have attempted to turn the blood into water than the reverse. But they chose to ape the miracle of Moses, and though there is no evidence of their succeeding even in this, yet the result went to harden still farther the obdurate heart of Pharaoh.

24. *The Egyptians digged round about,* &c. Probably they found so much as barely sufficed for the wants of existence, though at the expense of great labor and fatigue. The fact affords an affecting proof, how in the midst of wrath God remembers mercy. The people must indeed suffer for the perverseness of their rulers, but the righteous judge tempers the strokes which yet he does not spare.

CHAPTER VIII.

From the last verse of the previous

unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go [a] that they may serve me.

2 And if thou [b] refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with [c] frogs:

3 And the river shall bring forth

[a] ch. 3. 12, 18. [b] ch. 7. 14. & 9. 2. [c] Rev. 16. 13.

chapter it appears that the first plague was of a week's continuance. So long a time was probably necessary to give the judgment its full effect. Had it lasted but a day or two, it might have been referred to some casualty which did not require the admission of a supernatural agency. But when they perceived the river rolling its bloody tide day after day, and the nauseous pestilential vapors still increasing upon them and poisoning the air which they breathed, and all in accordance with what Moses had announced, they would be rendered doubly inexcusable if they refused to acknowledge the working of Omnipotence. Whatever may have been its influence upon the nation at large, it seems to have produced no salutary effect upon Pharaoh or his court; yet at the end of that time God was pleased to remove the calamity, and grant a short respite to king and people, that they might reflect upon the awful phenomenon, and peradventure be led to humble themselves before him. Yet the narrative informs us that the deliverance from the curse, like the curse itself,—the forbearance, as well as the judgments, of the Almighty—only served to prolong and aggravate their wickedness. A second plague is therefore now to be denounced.

1. *Let my people go that they may serve me.* Heb. וְיַעַבְדֻנִי *va-yaabdeni, and they shall serve me.* But the rendering of the particle וְ *ve* by 'that' is undoubtedly correct, and goes to confirm our interpretation of Ex. 7. 11, 12, where the same form of expression occurs. Examples of similar usage are al-

frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into [d] thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs:

[d] Ps. 105. 30.

most innumerable in the original Scriptures.

2. *Behold, I will smite all thy borders.* Heb. הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי נֹגֵף *hinnëh anoki nogëph, behold I smiting;* i. e. just about to smite, as Gen. 6. 13, 'Behold, I will destroy.' Heb. 'Behold I destroying;' according to a very frequent import of the present participle. The term 'borders' in scriptural usage does not merely denote the *limits, coasts,* or *boundaries* of a country, but in a larger sense its *regions, districts,* or *provinces* in general.

3. *The river shall bring forth frogs abundantly.* Heb. שׁרץ צפרדעים *sharatz tzephardeïm, shall swarm or crawl (with) frogs.* On the force of the original term, see Note on Gen. 1. 20. The emphatic phraseology of the text shows that nothing would be able to debar the access of these loathsome intruders into every nook and corner of the habitations of men. No doors, locks, or bolts; no walls, gates, or fences, should preclude their entrance. The circumstance of their coming up into the 'bed-chambers,' and into the 'ovens,' and 'kneading-troughs,' needs explanation to those whose domestic economy is so different from that of the ancient nations. *Their* lodgings were not in *upper stories,* but recesses on the ground floor; and their *ovens* were not like ours built on the side of a chimney, and adjacent to a fire-place, where the glowing heat would fright away the frogs; but they dug a hole in the ground, in which they placed an earthen pot, which having sufficiently heated they put their cakes upon the inside to be baked. To

4 And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.

5 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, [e] Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt.

6 And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and [f] the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.

7 [g] And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

[e] ch. 7. 19.

[f] Ps. 78. 45. & 105. 30. [g] ch. 7. 11.

find such places full of frogs when they came to heat them in order to bake their bread, and to find these loathsome creatures in their beds when they sought repose, must have been disgusting and distressing beyond measure. The fact that these noxious vermin were thus prompted to forego their natural habits, and instead of confining themselves to the waters and moist soils, to spread over the country and make their way to the most frequented and driest places, indicates the countless numbers in which they came forth; and this is still more confirmed by the immense heaps of their carcasses which ultimately corrupted the land. It is observable also that as the frog was one of the sacred animals of the Egyptians, the objects of their superstition became here, as in other instances, the instruments of their punishment. Indeed every line of the narrative of the plagues seems to have a point and force which, without some considerable acquaintance with the condition and usages of ancient Egypt, cannot be properly appreciated.

5. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, &c. Of the reception which Pharaoh gave to the present threatening, Moses gives us no account, leaving it to be inferred from the facts which ensued. From these it is obvious that he treated the message either with open or silent contempt. He probably scorned the idea of being terrified at a swarm of frogs—creatures loathsome indeed but despicably harmless. Nothing remained therefore but for Moses to execute his commission, and show the haughty monarch that the Lord of the universe could easily arm the most contemptible of his creatures to the intolerable annoyance or the utter destruction of himself and his hosts.

6. *The frogs came up, and covered the land.* Heb. 'And the frog came up,' collect. sing. for plur. The word of command has but to be uttered, and the Lord's armies make their appearance in countless myriads. Shoals of leaping, croaking, filthy frogs on their land, in their houses, in their beds, in their food! What a distressing and nauseous plague! Many delicate persons and children shudder at the sight of one as it suddenly leaps across their path. What must have been the condition of a people thus visited and pursued wherever they went by swarming multitudes of these loathsome vermin!

7. *The magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs.* Or, Heb. וירעלו *va-yaalu, that they might bring up*; i. e. the magicians *attempted* to do so, *that* they might bring up; precisely the same mode of speech with that, v. 1, '*that* they might serve me.' As in the two former cases, so here also we see no positive evidence that the magicians did any thing more than go through certain preliminary ceremonies of jugglery which may perhaps have deceived the senses of the spectators, or they might have obtained them from among the multitudes produced by Moses and Aaron. See Note on Ex. 7. 11, 12.

8 ¶ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, [h] Entreat the LORD that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people: and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.

9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee, and thy houses,

[h] ch. 9. 28. & 10. 17. Numb. 21. 7. 1 Kings 13. 6. Acts 8. 24.

8. *Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron,* &c. Symptoms of relenting begin at length to show themselves. The plague was too formidable to be despised, too mighty to be resisted, too extensive to be remedied. In the case of the waters turned into blood there was some mitigation of the scourge. They *could* procure pure water, though with great labor, by digging around the river. But from the plague of the frogs there was no respite or relief. In their houses, in their beds, at their tables, they were incessantly infested by these hated intruders. Whatever quantities of them were killed, besides infecting the air by their stench, their places were instantly made good by increased numbers, so that the very lives of the sufferers must have been a weariness to them. The judgment in its extremity is no longer endurable. Pharaoh is compelled to intercede for its removal. He who drove Moses and Aaron from him in wrath, with the angry words, 'Wherefore do ye Moses and Aaron let the people from their works; get you unto your burdens,' now sends for them in fear, alters his voice, and begs that they would entreat the Lord for him. He is now glad to be beholden to the mercy of that God of whom he had before spoken with the utmost disdain. The request to Moses and Aaron he backs with the promise to let the people go, in which perhaps he was *at the time* sincere; as much so undoubtedly as sinners usually are in the promises to God that are extorted from them under the pressure of the heavy hand of his judgments. But in this, as in a thousand similar cases time soon showed how little dependence was to be placed upon such promises. —— ¶ *That he may take away.* Heb. וירסר *vayaser, and he shall take away;* the same form of expression with that adverted to above. So also in the close of the verse, '*that* they may do sacrifice.' Heb. '*And* they shall do sacrifice.' Thus also where one Evangelist, Mark, 12. 17, has, '*And* the inheritance shall be ours;' another, Luke, 20. 4, has, '*That* the inheritance may be ours.'

9. *Glory over me.* Heb. התפאר עלי *hithpaër alai, have the honor over me.* Moses by these words seems to indicate so much satisfaction and joy at the least sign of relenting on the part of Pharaoh, that he is ready to humble himself in his presence, disclaiming, as it were, and foregoing the honor and pre-eminence which naturally accrued to him from the performance of such mighty works, and laying them at the feet of Pharaoh. So obsequious indeed does he profess himself in view of the hopeful change which had taken place in the king's mind, that he willingly gives him the honor of appointing a time when he should entreat the Lord for the removal of the plague. Gr. 'Appoint unto me when I shall pray.' Chal. 'Ask for thee a powerful work, and give thou the time.' The incident suggests an important practical hint. The ministers of God should be ever prompt to greet with joy the slightest symptoms of relenting in those to whom they may have been the occasion of suffering, whether bodily or mental. Indeed, a benevolent mind will be so rejoiced with such indications, that he will readily exchange the language and the air of sternness and severity for the most condescend-

that they may remain in the river only?

10 And he said, To-morrow. And he said, *Be it* according to thy word: that thou mayest know that [i] *there is* none like unto the LORD our God.

11 And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.

12 And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses [k] cried unto the LORD, because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh.

[i] ch. 9. 14. Deut. 33. 26. 2 Sam. 7. 22. 1 Chron. 17. 20. Ps. 86. 8. Isai. 46. 9. Jer. 10. 6, 7.

[k] ver. 30. ch. 9. 33. & 10. 18. & 32. 11. James 5. 16, 17, 18.

ing deportment, in order to encourage the incipient workings of a godly sorrow.——¶ *That they may remain in the river only.* Not that they should be removed by being transferred from the land to the river, but that they should be henceforth *confined* to the river, and not suffered to infest the land any more. This is the true import of the original. Those that were already on the land died and were gathered in heaps.

10. *And he said, To-morrow.* Heb. למחר *lemahor, against to-morrow.* It is perhaps a natural query why Pharaoh did not demand an *instantaneous* cessation of the plague? To this it may be replied, that he was possibly desirous of seeing whether the frogs might not disappear of themselves in the meantime. If so, he would have some show of reason to doubt whether they were really the product of supernatural agency, or had *chanced* to appear in such countless numbers. We may suppose moreover that it was to meet some such latent misgiving in his mind that Moses had given him the option of the time that he should fix for the withdrawment of the plague. He would leave no ground for suspicion that the miracle was owing to any other than supernatural agency. Add to this as another reason for the delay of a day, that Pharaoh may have supposed from the past that some time would be requisite for prayer and consultation of the Deity on the part of Moses, which he was disposed, as a reasonable thing, to allow.——¶ *That thou mayest know,* &c. These words declare to us the grand design of all the dispensations, whether of judgment or mercy, of the Most High, that he may be convinced that 'there is none like unto the Lord our God;' none so wise, so good, so mighty; none so formidable as an enemy, none so desirable as a friend. Nothing would more tend to produce this impression on his mind than the circumstance of his being permitted *himself* to assign the time for the removal of the frogs, and then to see the event punctually accomplished.

12. *Cried unto the Lord because of the frogs.* Heb. על דבר *al debar, upon the word* (or matter) of the frogs; i. e. on the subject of the frogs, in regard to them. See Note on Gen. 15. 1. From the force of the original for 'cried' (יצעק *yitzak*) it is to be at least inferred that Moses prayed with great earnestness and intensity of spirit, if not with special energy of utterance. Though the word has a primary reference to the use of the voice, yet in Ex. 14. 15, it is evidently employed where nothing more than a fervent *mental* petition is intended. 'Wherefore *criest thou* (תצעק *titzak*) unto me?' See Note in loc.——¶ *Which he had brought against Pharaoh.* Heb. אשר שם לפרעה *asher sam le-Pharoh, which he had put to Pharaoh;* i. e. proposed, appointed to Pharaoh. In other words, he made supplication to the Lord relative to the removal of the frogs on the conditions which he had *fixed, settled,* or *agreed to*

13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses: and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

14 And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank.

15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was [l] respite, [m] he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

16 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the

[l] Eccles. 8. 11. [m] ch. 7. 14.

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with Pharaoh. This sense of the word is rather more agreeable to the original, and equally so, we think, to the context.

13. *Out of the villages.* Rather according to the Heb. 'out of the courts.' The term חצרת *hăzeroth* is indeed occasionally applied to 'villages;' but its primary sense is that of an *open court or area, a place walled or fenced round.* This is probably the meaning here. The writer's design seems to be to say, that the frogs first deserted the houses, then the court-yards or enclosed grounds about the houses, and lastly the open fields.

14. *They gathered them together upon heaps.* Heb. 'Gathered them together, heaps, heaps.' See Note on Gen. 14. 10. They were now delivered from the principal calamity, but they still had a most offensive evil to endure to keep Pharaoh in mind of his promise. Being obliged to gather together the dead frogs in heaps, the number and size of such masses of putrifying matter were so great as to fill the whole air with an odor that was intolerable.

15. *When Pharaoh saw that there was respite.* Heb. הרוחה *harevahah, a breathing.* Gr. αναψυξις, *a refreshing,* as rendered, Acts, 3. 10, 'When the times of *refreshing* (αναψυξεως) shall come from the presence of the Lord.' The usual effect of the intermission of divine judgments upon obstinate offenders is here strikingly displayed. 'Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.' Is. 26. 10. The respite granted in order to lead the rebellious king to repentance, serves but to embolden him in the career of disobedience, and harden his heart afresh. Without considering either what he had lately felt, or what he had reason to fear, he utterly disregards his promise, and settles down again into a posture of impious defiance of the wrath of heaven. How exact the counterpart which this conduct finds in that of sinners awakened and aroused by some startling appeal of Providence or of the Holy Spirit. No more striking picture of this perverseness has ever been furnished than that which we find in the words of the Psalmist, Ps. 78. 34—42. 'When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant. How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.'

16. *Stretch out thy rod.* The judgment now to be inflicted was to be inflicted without any previous warning. On the other hand, the fourth and fifth were preceded by a warning, while the sixth was not; again, the seventh and eighth were announced, but not so the ninth; under the tenth the people were

land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and [n] it became lice in man and in beast: all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

[n] Ps. 105. 31.

sent away. God was under no obligations to make known his purposes to Pharaoh before hand, and from his gross abuse of the respite granted him, he had no reason to be surprised if another plague of tenfold severity, or of utter destructiveness should suddenly burst forth upon him. But though God sees fit again to 'correct' him without warning, yet it is 'with measure, lest he should be brought to nothing.'

17. *It became lice*, &c. Heb. כנם *kinnim*. Gr. σκνιφες, *gnats*. Of the real instrument by which the third plague was effected, we are inclined to adopt, as most probable, the view given by the Editor of the Pictorial Bible. 'The Septuagint renders the Hebrew word כנים *kinnim*, by σκνιφες, which means the mosquito gnat; and this rendering is entitled to great respect, when we recollect that the translators lived in Egypt. It is also confirmed by Origen and Jerome, who, with the Septuagint, form perhaps the best mass of authority on such a point which it is possible to possess. Gesenius, Dr. Boothroyd, and others, concur in this view of the word; but it is certain that the generality of interpreters agree with the common translation, which perhaps may be accounted for by the fact, that the noisome parasite is better known in the West than the mosquito, although, happily, neither of them are so generally familiar as in the East. The writer has had some experience in different countries of the misery and continual irritation which the mosquito-gnat occasions, and can say, without the least hesitation, that of all insect plagues there is none which he should think so intolerable. The activity of these insects, their small size, their insatiable thirst for blood, and the power of their sting, which enable them to run riot not only on the exposed parts of the person, but on those that are thinly covered, as the legs, almost render existence a calamity during the seasons in which they most abound. The painful sensation which their sting produces, and the intolerable and protracted itching which ensues, with the combined torture resulting from the infliction of fresh stings while the former are still smarting, is scarcely less distressing to the mind than to the body. To secure sleep at night, the inhabitants of the countries infested by these insects are obliged to shelter themselves under mosquito-nets or curtains; and it deserves to be mentioned that this precaution was used by the ancient Egyptians. There is a remarkable passage on this subject in Herodotus. After mentioning how the country is infested by gnats, he says that as the wind will not allow these insects to ascend to any considerable elevation, the inhabitants of Upper Egypt sleep in turrets to avoid these tormentors; but that in lower Egypt the people sleep securely underneath their nets with which they fish by day, and which they spread over their beds at night. This has puzzled translators and others; but it is a fact that mosquitoes and other flies will not pass through nets, the meshes of which are much more than large enough to admit them. This is practically known in some parts of Italy, where the inhabitants use net window-curtains which freely admit the air while they exclude gnats and flies. How severely this calamity was felt is evinced by the fact that the Egyptians and other nations of antiquity had gods whose especial

18 And ° the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they ᵖ could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast.

° ch. 7. 11.

ᵖ Luke 10. 18. 2 Tim. 3. 8, 9.

province it was to protect them from these and other 'flies.' The 'Baalzebub,' or 'god of flies,' so often mentioned in Scripture, was a deity of this description. We read also of towns near lakes and marshy grounds (where these insects particularly abound) being deserted on account of this nuisance, as well as of important military undertakings being relinquished. As the mosquitoes breed in marshy soil, and particularly in moist rice-grounds, where such exist, the annual overflowing of the Nile renders Egypt but too favorable to their production. They accordingly appear in immense swarms, and the testimony of travellers concur in declaring that there is no country, in the old continent at least, where the mosquito-gnats are so numerous and voracious as in Egypt, or where the pain of their wound and the consequent smart and itching are so acute. We have abstained from describing them, as their general appearance and habits do not differ from those of the common gnat; but there is no comparison in the degree of annoyance which they occasion. The Egyptian gnat is rather small. It is ash-colored, with white spots on the articulation of the legs. It may be objected to the view of the text which we have taken, that it detracts from the miraculous nature of the visitation to suppose it connected with insects which Egypt *naturally* produces in such abundance. But this objection equally applies to 'lice,' which swarm there to such a degree that it is difficult for the most cleanly persons to keep themselves wholly free from them. If we take either reading, it is only necessary to conclude (which the text expressly states) that the creatures were brought in swarms most extraordinary even in Egypt, and perhaps that they were brought thus abundantly at a time of the year when they do not usually abound.' *Pict. Bib.*

18. *The magicians did so*, &c.—*but could not.* That is, they tried the utmost of their skill to imitate the miracle, but they could not. The motives which led them at first to engage in the contest with Moses, the shame of desisting, and some slight appearances of success in their former attempts, prompted them still to carry on their imposture in the present instance. But all was unavailing. With all their skill in magic, and with all their dexterity in deceiving the spectators, they could not even succeed so far as they had already done in producing a specious counterfeit of the work of Moses. Had they hitherto performed real miracles, how came they to be baffled now? It cannot be a greater miracle to produce lice or gnats, than to turn rods into serpents, water into blood, or to create frogs. It is indeed often said that they were now laid under *restraint*. But it does not appear, from the text, that they were laid under any other restraint than that which arose from the impracticability of the thing itself compared with their other performances. The vermin now produced were so minute that it is inconceivable that any human artifice should even *appear* to produce them. Besides in all the former instances the magicians knew beforehand what they were to undertake, and had time for preparation. But now, as the plague came without warning, they had no opportunity for contriving any expedient for imitating or impeaching the act of Moses. And had they been allowed time, how was it possible for them to make it appear, that they produced these creatures by which they themselves and all the country were al-

19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* [q] the finger of God: and Pharaoh's [r] heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

20 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, [s] Rise up early in the morning,

[q] 1 Sam. 6. 3, 9. Ps. 8. 3. Matt. 12. 28. Luke 11. 20. [r] ver. 15. [s] ch. 7. 15.

ready covered? What then was more natural than that the abortiveness of their present attempts should be expressly mentioned, and that too without implying that they had *really* succeeded in any former instance?

19. *This is the finger of God.* That is, the special work and power of God; who is said, after the manner of men, to do things by his hand or 'finger;' Ps. 8. 4.—102. 26.—109. 27.—1 Sam. 6. 9. To this phraseology Christ had reference when he refuted those who withstood his miracles, as these magicians did Moses; Luke, 11. 20, 'If I with *the finger of God* cast out devils;' which another Evangelist expresses thus; 'If I cast out devils by the *Spirit of God*.' It may well be doubted, however, whether by this acknowledgment the magicians intended to award any honor to Moses and Aaron, or even to the true God. The original expression as uttered by them, may have reference not to Jehovah, but to the divinities worshipped in Egypt; so that it is simply equivalent to saying, that were it not for the invisible agency of the gods (Elohim), Moses and Aaron were no better workers of wonders than themselves, but that in some way unaccountable they were frustrated in their attempts. This was the best apology they could make for their own failure of success, and to prevent Pharoah from reproaching them with the want of skill in their profession. —— ¶ *And Pharaoh's heart was hardened.* How clearly does it appear from this, that unbelief will sometimes survive the refutation of the lies by

and stand before Pharaoh; (lo, he cometh forth to the water;) and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, [t] Let my people go, that they may serve me:

21 Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* upon thee, and up-

[t] ver. 1.

which it is nourished. Who would not have thought that this confession of the magicians, which was a virtual avowal of the impotency of their craft, together with the striking displeasure of the Almighty, manifested in the new calamity visited upon him, would have made the haughty monarch at least begin to waver in his resolution? But no. We still read the affecting record of his perverseness and his guilt, showing that he grew more and more obstinate. 'Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.'

20. *Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh,* &c. The servant of God was not to be behindhand with the earliest morning visitation of Pharaoh to the god of his idolatry, nor was he to be daunted or deterred by what had happened from again meeting him face to face, and renewing his inexorable demands. Proud and imperious and exasperated as he was, he was again to be challenged in the name of the Most High, to let the captives go free, and in case of his refusal, to prepare to encounter another detachment of the Lord's armies, no less fierce and formidable than that from which he had just been delivered — provided indeed he *were* delivered from it, which is not expressly stated. Jehovah had but to 'hiss for the fly,' and the winged insect hosts would be present, in countless multitudes, to execute his orders.

21. *I will send swarms* of flies *upon thee,* &c. Heb. ערב *arob, a mixture,* or *mixed swarm;* i. e. probably of flies,

on thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms *of flies*, and also the ground whereon they *are*.

wasps, hornets, and other vexatious and stinging insects. It will be observed that 'flies' in our version, being printed in Italics, is not in the original, nor is it easy to ascertain precisely what kind of *swarm* or *mixture* formed the constituents of the fourth plague. The original term, ערב *arob*, applied in Ex. 12. 38, to men, and rendered, 'a mixed multitude,' comes from ערב *to mingle*, and is understood by most of the Jewish interpreters to imply *a mixed multitude of noisome beasts*. Thus, Targ. Jer. 'A mixed swarm of wild beasts.' Chal. 'A mixed swarm of wild beasts of the field.' Josephus, 'Various sorts of pestilential creatures.' Rab. Solomon, 'All kinds of venomous animals, as serpents and scorpions.' Aben Ezra, 'All the wild beasts intermingled together, as lions, bears, and leopards.' The Sept. however, renders it by κυομυιαν, *dog-fly*, from its biting, an insect that fastens its teeth so deep in the flesh, and sticks so very close, that it oftentimes makes cattle run mad. The etymology of the word leads us, on the whole, to regard as probably true the rendering given Ps. 78. 45, , 'He sent (ערב *arob*) *divers sorts of flies* among them which devoured them;' so that it was not one particular kind, but all sorts of vexatious, winged creatures of the smaller tribes, mingled together in one prodigious swarm. It must be admitted, however, that there is so striking a similarity between this and what we have *supposed* to be the preceding plague, as to give some countenance to the suggestion of the Editor of the Pictorial Bible. 'As the word *Arob* implies a mixture, the Vulgate has translated it 'all sorts of flies,' and from thence our version 'swarms of flies,' where it is to be observed that 'flies,' in Italics, is not in the original. We are left to conjecture what kind of fly is meant, or whether, indeed, the plague consisted in flies at all. The language of the 24th verse is remarkable: 'The land was corrupted by reason of the swarm,' which could hardly apply to any 'fly,' properly so called. If also we refer to Ps. 78. 45, we see the *Arob* is described as *devouring* the Egyptians, which is an act that seems inapplicable to a fly. Upon the whole, we strongly incline to the opinion which has found some able supporters of late years, that the Egyptian beetle (*blatta Ægyptiaca*) is denoted in this place. The beetle, which is almost every where a nuisance, is particularly abundant and offensive in Egypt, and all the circumstances which the Scriptures in different places intimates concerning the *Arob*, applies with much accuracy to this species. It devours every thing that comes in its way, even clothes, books, and plants, and does not hesitate to inflict severe bites on man. If also we conceive that one object of these plagues was to chastise the Egyptians through their own idols, there is no creature of its class which could be more fitly employed than this insect. What precise place it filled in the religious system of that remarkable people has never, we believe, been exactly determined; but that it occupied a conspicuous place among their sacred creatures seems to be evinced by the fact, that there is scarcely any figure which occurs more frequently in Egyptian sculpture and painting. Visiters to the British Museum may satisfy themselves of this fact, and they will also observe a remarkable colossal figure of a beetle in greenish colored granite. Figures of beetles cut in green-colored stone occur very frequently in the ancient tombs of Egypt. They are generally plain; but some have hieroglyphic

22 And [a] I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I *am* the LORD, in the midst of the earth.

23 And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to-morrow shall this sign be.

24 And the LORD did so: and [b] there came a grievous swarm *of flies* into the house of Pharaoh, and

[a] ch. 9. 4, 6, 26. & 10. 23. & 11. 6, 7. & 12. 13.

[b] Ps. 78. 45. & 105. 31.

figures cut on their backs, and others have been found with human heads. The Egyptian beetle is about the size of the common beetle, and its general color is also black. It is chiefly distinguished by having a broad white band upon the anterior margin of its oval corslet.' *Pict. Bible.* The reader will perceive that the real nature of this judgment is still a matter of great uncertainty, and one on which we can scarcely obtain even a balance of probabilities.——¶ *The ground upon which they are.* It is not clear to what the pronoun 'they' refers. If it be to the mixed swarm, it would seem to carry the implication that they were some kind of *ground reptiles*, probably of the smaller species, and if this were so, it favors the above interpretation of *beetles* more decisively than any thing that has been yet offered.

22. *And I will sever.* Heb. הפלרתי *hiphlĕthi, I will marvellously sever;* i. e. will separate and exempt in a marvellous manner. Accordingly, the Gr. renders it, 'I will marvellously glorify, or miraculously honor;' the same word which occurs Luke, 5. 2, 6, 'And they were all amazed, and *glorified* God.' The Heb. term occurs, Ps. 4. 3, 'Know that the Lord *hath set apart* him that is godly for himself;' i. e. hath gloriously or honorably distinguished, discriminated, appropriated him that is godly. Again, Ex. 33. 16, 'So shall we be *separated*, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.' Gr. 'Shall be more glorious.' Compare Wisd. 18. 8, speaking of this event; 'For wherewith thou didst punish our adversaries, by the same thou didst *glorify* us whom thou hadst called.'——¶ *I will put a division.* Heb. שמתי פדת *samti peduth, I will put or set redemption.* Ps. 111. 9, 'He sent *redemption* unto his people.' The Gr. renders it by διαστολη *division*, or *distinction*, the same word which occurs Rom. 3. 22, 'The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no *difference* (διαστολη).' Hitherto the plagues appear to have been common to the Egyptians and Hebrews. We can easily understand that the latter were included in these visitations, to punish them for their partially favoring the idolatries of Egypt, and for their unbelief. But as this may have contributed to prevent the Egyptians from seeing the finger of God in the previous plagues, a distinction was henceforth to be made, and the land of Goshen to be exempted from the calamities still impending. It was a 'division' strikingly illustrative of that final diversity of allotment which awaits the two great classes of men, the righteous and the wicked, in the great day of discrimination. It may be remarked that as the preceding verse announces the severing of the land of Goshen from the rest of Egypt, some of the Jewish commentators understand by this verse not a mere repetition of the former, but an assurance that if ever any of the Israelites should chance to be in any other part of Egypt, they should *there* also remain uninjured by the plague.

24. *There came a grievous swarm.* Heb. ערב כבד *arob kabĕd, a heavy swarm.* The epithet in the original may apply either to the *grievousness*

into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm *of flies*.

25 ¶ And Pharaoh called for Moses, and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.

26 And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice [y] the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?

y Gen. 43. 32. & 46. 34. Deut. 7. 25, 26. & 12. 31

of the plague considered in its *effects*, or to the *vast numbers* of the insects by which it was brought about. See Note on Gen. 50. 9.——¶ *The land was corrupted;* or Heb. 'destroyed,' as the word often signifies. See Note on Gen. 6. 13. By the land we are probably to understand the 'inhabitants of the land,' who were destroyed in the sense of being reduced to the greatest extremities, and of suffering an annoyance that was almost beyond endurance, in addition to which probably many of them actually perished in consequence of the inflammation produced by the bites or stings of the venomous insects. The original word, however, is often used to signify the afflictive and wasting effects of a judgment which at the same time falls short of actually extinguishing life. Thus the Psalmist says of this and the preceding plague of frogs, Ps. 78. 45, 'He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which *devoured them* (יֹאכְלֵם *yokelum*); and frogs which *destroyed them* (תְּשַׁחִיתֵם *tashhithēm*, *corrupted them*).' It is probably to this judgment more especially that the author of the Book of Wisdom alludes when he says, ch. 16. 8—10, 'And indeed thou madest thine enemies to confess that it is thou who deliverest from all evil: For them the bitings of grasshoppers and flies killed, neither was there found any remedy for their life: for they were worthy to be punished by such. But thy sons not the very teeth of venomous dragons overcame, for thy mercy was ever by them.' It is, however, but fair to remark that some commentators of note suppose that the 'corruption' or 'destruction' of the land here mentioned was the spoiling, devouring, or consuming of the fruits of the land, the herbage, the young grain, the pasture grounds, &c. If the plague consisted of swarms of *beetles*, this is not an improbable supposition.

25. *Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.* It is evident that each successive plague thus far exceeded in intensity that which went before it, and so grievous was the present, that with a view to its removal Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and proposed to them a *compromise*. Unable to bear the tormenting scourge, and yet unwilling to resign his grasp of his Hebrew bondmen, he flatters himself that by *a half-way measure* he may secure himself from injury in both respects. He consents that they should sacrifice to their God, provided they would do it in the land of Egypt.

26. *Moses said, It is not meet so to do.* Heb. לֹא נָכוֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן *lo nakon laasoth kēn, it is not appointed, ordained, constituted, so to do.* The reply of Moses was prompt and decided. He knew his duty too well thus to depart, in the least degree, from the strict import of his instructions. Implicit obedience was his only rule of conduct, and by adhering in the most inflexible manner to the expressed will of Jehovah, the name of Moses has come down to the latest generation honored by the testimony of pre-eminent *fidelity*—'Moses was *faithful* in all his house.' Far from accepting this concession, he tells Pharaoh there is no alternative. His *entire requisition* must be complied with, or it would amount to nothing. He more-

27 We will go [z] three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as [a] he shall command us.

28 And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness: only ye shall not go very far away: [b] entreat for me.

[z] ch. 3. 18. [a] ch. 3. 12.

[b] ver. 8. ch. 9. 28. 1 Kings 13. 6.

over condescends to state the reason *why* it is impossible to listen to such a proposal. He in effect presents his objections in the form of a dilemma: If we sacrifice here, we must do it either after the manner of the Egyptians, or of the Israelites. If after *their* manner, that would be an abomination to the Lord our God; if after our own manner, that would be an abomination to them, and they will stone us; for they will not endure to see us slay those animals for sacrifice, which they adore as deities. Chal. 'For the beasts which the Egyptians worship, shall we offer for sacrifice; lo, shall we offer for sacrifice the beasts which the Egyptians worship?'

27. *As he shall command us.* The Israelites knew not, therefore, precisely in what manner they should serve the Lord, till they came to the place appointed. So Moses says, ch. 10. 26, 'We know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither.'

28. *Only ye shall not go very far away.* The haughty monarch still shrinks from an *unconditional* submission to the mandate of heaven. He will yield the former point, and allow them to go out of Egypt, but then they must agree not to go *very far away*,—a stipulation of which the object evidently was to keep them still within his reach. In this, and still more clearly in the subsequent incidents, the king betrays his suspicion that under the plea of going into the wilderness to worship their God, the real intention of the Hebrews was to make their escape from his power altogether. Indeed it must be admitted that the *real* question before Pharaoh was not merely the ostensible matter, whether the Hebrews were to be allowed a week's holiday, to go and hold their feast in the desert, but whether he was henceforth to lose entirely so considerable and so useful a part of the population of the kingdom. This was the Egyptian view of the question; to which is to be added the apprehension that becoming thus independent of their control, they might one day resolve themselves into a very dangerous hostile power on the frontiers, whether in the desert as pastoral nomades, or as a settled people in Palestine. Viewing the matter thus, as the Egyptian king unquestionably did, his conduct, though no more excusable, is somewhat less surprising. It goes to illustrate his position to bear in mind, that he could say *he* had not brought them into bondage. They had labored for a century in the public service; whence the king, or few Egyptians then living, had ever known them otherwise than as bondsmen, and few, if any Hebrews then living, could remember when they were free. In these circumstances it may justly be doubted whether there is now any state having bondsmen, however acquired, which would consent to part with them on much easier terms than the urgent compulsion to which God had recourse with Pharaoh. Corrupt human nature has ever shown an inveterate pertinacity in holding on to a usurped dominion over a nation or community of slaves. No matter how clear their *right* to be free, or how great the injustice or oppression of detaining them in bondage, yet for the most part men will 'harden their hearts,' just as did Pharaoh, in resisting the claims of justice, and will resign their *asserted* possessions only with their lives.

29 And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat the LORD that the swarms *of flies* may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow: but let not Pharaoh [c] deal deceitfully any more, in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.

30 And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and [d] entreated the LORD:

31 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses: and he removed the swarms *of flies* from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one.

[c] ver. 15. [d] ver. 12.

32 And Pharaoh [e] hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

CHAPTER IX.

THEN the LORD said unto Moses, [a] Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

2 For if thou [b] refuse to let *them* go, and wilt hold them still,

3 Behold, the [c] hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: *there shall be* a very grievous murrain.

[e] ver. 15. ch. 4. 21. [a] ch. 8. 1. [b] ch. 8. 2. [c] ch. 7. 4.

29—32. *I will entreat the Lord.* As Pharaoh had appended to his proposal a request that Moses would intercede for him with the Lord for the removal of the plague, he expresses his readiness to do so, but he at the same time bids him beware of acting any more deceitfully with the Lord or his servants. Those that have once been perfidious are justly liable to suspicion, and therefore have no grounds to take it ill that they are admonished on this score in regard to the future. With what propriety Moses exhorted Pharaoh to beware of violating his promise again appears from the sequel. No sooner was this calamity over-past, than like a bent bow the spirit of the king sprung back to its former habitual obstinacy, and heedless of the admonition and of his own word, he refused to let the people go.

CHAPTER IX.

In four successive plagues of constantly increasing severity had Pharaoh already been made to feel the lighting down of the heavy arm of the divine indignation, without yet being brought to submit to the mandate of heaven. He consequently yet stands a mark for the arrows from Jehovah's quiver. His last recent breach of faith was so gross an affront both to God and to Moses, that we might have looked for the infliction of another judgment without the least premonition. But warning is here given of another plague of still more deadly nature than any of the preceding, in case he should persist in refusing to let the people go. Would that his compliance had spared the historian the necessity of relating any thing but the *threatening!* But alas! we pass directly into the narrative of its *execution.*

2. *Wilt hold them still.* Heb. מחזיק בם *mahazik bam, strengthenest upon them;* i. e. forcibly detaining them.

3. *Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon the cattle,* &c. Heb. יד יהוה היתה *yad Yehovah hoyah, the hand of the Lord (is) being* (i. e. made to be) upon the cattle, &c. Carrying still the *future* import which so frequently pertains to the present participle. The plague in this instance was to come *directly* from the hand of the Lord, without the intermediate wielding or waving of Aaron's rod.——¶ *A very grievous murrain.* Heb. דבר כבד מאד *deber kabed meod, a pestilence very heavy;* i. e. a very great and general mortality, as

4 And [d] the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel, and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all *that is* the children's of Israel.

5 And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land.

6 And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and [e] all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.

[d] ch. 8. 22.

[e] Ps. 78. 50.

appears from v. 6. The original word for 'murrain,' when applied to men, is translated 'pestilence,' and is rendered in the Gr. both here and elsewhere, by θανατος, *death*. See Note on Ex. 5. 3. Our English word 'murrain' comes either from the French *mourir, to die*, or from the Greek μαραινω, *to grow lean, to waste away*. It is with us applied to a particular contagious disease among cattle, the symptoms of which are a hanging down and swelling of the head, abundance of gum in the eyes, rattling in the throat, difficulty of breathing, palpitation of the heart, staggering, a hot breath, and a shining tongue; all which symptoms prove that a general inflammation has taken place. But as no particular disorder is here specified, *mortality* would have been a better rendering. There was a peculiar affliction in the judgment of the murrain, not only from the Egyptians being dependent on their animals in various ways for their sustenance and comfort, but also from their being compelled to witness their excruciating sufferings without the power of affording relief. The poor beasts themselves were guiltless of wrong, yet having their being under a constitution in which they are a sort of appendage to man, they are made subject to suffering by reason of his sin, or as Jeremiah expresses it, ch. 12. 4, 'For the wickedness of the land, the beasts are consumed.' This infliction therefore was a trial to Pharaoh and the Egyptians whether they would be at all wrought upon by a view of the *effects* of their sin as evinced in the sufferings of the unoffending brute creation. At the same time, in order to impress them still more forcibly with the displeasure of God against them, the Israelites, whom they so much despised and oppressed, were entirely exempt from this calamity.

5. *To-morrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land.* The fixing of the time in this manner would make the judgment when it came the more remarkable. '*We* know not what any day will bring forth, and therefore cannot say what we will do to-morrow, but God can.' *Henry.*

6. *All the cattle of Egypt died.* That is, some of all sorts; not absolutely each and every one; for we find, v. 19, 25, some remaining which were smitten by a subsequent plague. This peculiar usage of the word 'all,' as denoting *some of all kinds*, instead of the *absolute totality* of the number spoken of, is of great importance to a right understanding of the sacred Scriptures throughout. Thus, 1 Tim. 2. 4, 'Who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto a knowledge of the truth;' i. e. all classes and ranks of men; for he had just before exhorted that prayers should be made for 'kings and for all that are in authority;' implying, that as no order of men are placed without the pale of salvation, so none should be left out of the supplications of the saints. In like manner it is to be observed, that while in v. 25, of this chapter it is said that 'the hail smote *every* herb of the field,' in ch. 10. 15, we are told that the locusts ate 'every herb of the land *which the hail had left*.' For a full and interesting illustration of this phraseology, see J. P. Smith's Geology and Scripture Compared, p. 247, in respect to the universality of the deluge.

7 And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And [f] the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

8 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

9 And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be [g] a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

10 And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven: and it became [h] a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man, and upon beast.

[f] ch. 7. 14. & 8. 32.

[g] Rev. 16. 2. [h] Deut. 28. 27.

7. *And Pharaoh sent*, &c. This shows that he was at least somewhat impressed by the plague as a calamity of very marvellous operation. His sending to ascertain the fact of the Israelites' exemption indicates that he was not satisfied with reports to that effect. But whether the result of the mission convinced him that the hand of God was in the affliction or not, it is clear that no permanent good impression was made upon him. His heart remained still unsoftened, and he refused to let Israel go.

8. *Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace*, &c. Something similar to this is still to be recognized in the maledictory usages of the East. 'When the magicians pronounce an imprecation on an individual, a village, or a country, they take ashes of cow's dung (or from a common fire,) and *throw them in the air*, saying to the objects of their displeasure, such a sickness, or such a curse, shall surely come upon you.' *Roberts*. The obstinacy of Pharaoh under such an accumulation of calls, warnings, and judgments was becoming continually a sin of a more and more aggravated character, and it was therefore fitting that the punishments it incurred should also be of a growing intensity. As the ravages of the pestilence that had wasted their flocks and herds had proved unavailing, a plague was now to be sent that should seize their bodies and touch them to the quick. The Heb. term for 'ashes,' as it comes from a root signifying 'to blow,' properly denotes the fine cinereal particles which are carried off in the dense clouds of smoke arising from a furnace. The original for 'furnace' signifies also a 'lime-kiln or brick-kiln;' and as these were among the instruments of oppression to the Israelites, it was fitting that they should be converted to a means of chastisement to the Egyptians, for God oftentimes makes men to recognize their sin in their punishment.

9. *It shall become dust*, &c.; i. e. it shall by a miraculous diffusion become a fine cinder-like sleet floating in the atmosphere above the surface of the earth like a cloud of dust which does not subside, and wherever it lights upon the persons of men causing a 'boil breaking forth with blains.' Heb. 'boil budding, germinating, or efflorescing with pustules or blisters.' The original term for 'boil,' שְׁחִין *shehin*, denotes *an inflammation*, which gives us the true sense of the obsolete word 'blains,' accompanied with a sense of tormenting heat, which first produces a morbid tumor, and then a malignant ulcer. In Job, 2. 7, 8, the word occurs in the sense of a *burning itch* or an *inflamed scab*, which Job could not remove with his nails, and was therefore obliged to make use of a potsherd, or fragment of a broken earthen vessel, for the purpose. In the case of the Egyptians, the 'Shehin' was of a still more virulent nature,

11 And the [i] magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boil: for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; [k] as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

13 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, [l] Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people: [m] that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth.

[i] ch. 8. 18, 19. 2 Tim. 3. 9. [k] ch. 4. 21. [l] ch. 8. 20. [m] ch. 8. 10.

so that they were in fact visited with a treble punishment at once, viz. aching boils, nauseous ulcers, and burning itch. To this severe plague the threatening of Moses, Deut. 28. 27, obviously has reference; 'The Lord will smite thee with the *botch of Egypt*, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch whereof thou canst not be healed.' The Gr. renders it by ελκος, *ulcer*, which occurs, Rev. 16. 2, which in our version is translated 'noisome and grievous sore.' The judgment of the first vial, therefore, considered in the letter, was similar to that of the sixth plague of Egypt.

11. *The magicians could not stand before Moses.* They had probably hitherto continued to linger about the person of Pharaoh, confirming him in his obstinate refusal to let the people go, and pretending that though Moses had thus far performed works beyond their skill, yet they should doubtless be too hard for him at last; but now, being seized with these loathsome and painful ulcers, they were utterly confounded, and quitting the court in disgrace, were henceforth no more heard of. See an allusion to this part of the sacred history, 2 Tim. 3. 8, 9.

12. *And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh.* Heb. וַיְחַזֵּק יְהוָה *yehazzĕk*. On the import of the term, see Note on Ex. 4. 21. God had there threatened that he *would* harden Pharaoh's heart, but we do not, until we come to the present passage, find it expressly said that he *did* harden it. Here, it is true, the effect is ascribed to the divine agency, but after what we have remarked at so much length on this subject in that place, the reader will scarcely be in danger of putting a wrong construction on the words. It is not to be understood that God, by a positive act, *created* any hardness of heart in Pharaoh, or that he immediately put forth any influence to render him callous and incapable of right feeling. He had before hardened his own heart by resisting both the grace and the wrath of heaven, and nothing more is meant by the expression before us, than that God was pleased to leave him under the control of his own strong delusions, and so to order the events of his providence as to make him more and more obstinate. In no other sense did God harden his heart, than by permitting him to rush forward in precisely such a course of rebellion as would issue in his hardening his own heart. But even this was a fearful judgment, and one that speaks awfully to those who do violence to their own consciences and sin with a high hand.

14. *I will send all my plagues upon thine heart.* In again repeating his demand for his people's deliverance, and his threatenings against Pharaoh's disobedience, the Most High makes a startling and terrible declaration. If lesser judgments do not do their work, God will send greater. Moses is charged to tell Pharaoh that, in the plagues that remained to be inflicted there would be

15 For now I will [n] stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee

[n] ch. 3. 20.

and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

a kind of concentrated terribleness, so that each one should come upon him as if with the accumulated weight of all the rest. What he had already experienced was indeed grievous, but it should be nothing compared to what was to follow. They were to be such plagues as should not only endanger the body, but *smite the heart, the inner man.* They should penetrate the inward spirit with such indescribable pangs of terror, that it would seem as if the whole magazine of heaven's vengeance were opened upon him and his people. This seems to be what is intended by the language—'I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart,' where we are probably to understand by 'this time,' the time occupied by the whole ensuing course of judgments that should finally end in the utter destruction of Pharaoh.

15. *For now I will stretch out my hand that I may smite*, &c. Heb. כי עתה שלחתי את ידי ואך *ki attah shalahti eth yadi va-ak, for now have I sent forth my hand and smitten.* The true construction is somewhat ambiguous. The verbs in the original undoubtedly require a *past* rendering, though the Greek, with our own and several other versions, give the *future*. But it does not appear in what sense Pharaoh and his people could be said to have been cut off by *pestilence*, as they were drowned in the Red Sea, unless the term be taken in the general sense of *mortality*, to which it is probably a valid objection, that the original has the definite article (בהדבר=בדבר *by the pestilence*) implying a *particular* pestilence. At the same time, if it be applied to the past, it is evident that it must be understood in a *qualified* and *hypothetical* rather than in an *absolute* sense; for Pharaoh had not yet been *really* cut off from the earth. But the idiom of the original will easily admit of this *conditional* import of the passage, and we may consider the meaning of the divine speaker as fairly represented by the following paraphrase, which is largely sustained by Rabbinical and other critical authorities: 'For I *had, or could have, stretched* out my hand (i. e. in the plague of the murrain which destroyed so many of the beasts, and could easily have numbered thee among its victims,) and I *had* (potentially, though not in actual fact) smitten thee and thy people with (that) pestilence, and thou *wert* (as good as) *cut off* from the earth.' On the same principle it is said, Luke, 5. 6, 'They enclosed a great multitude of fishes; *and their net brake*;' i. e. if we may so express it, the net, *considered in itself*, brake, but was kept whole by the power of God; for had it *actually* broken, the fish would have escaped, whereas it is said, 'they filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.' In like manner, if we mistake not, it is said, Ps. 105. 26—28, 'He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen. They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.' That is, there was such an intrinsic moral power in these miracles to beget belief, to work submission and compliance; they were in themselves so convincing, so overpowering, so absolutely charged with demonstration; that the writer speaks as if it would be an abuse of language in him, equal to the abuse of reason in them, not to admit the actual working of the legitimate effect. He says, therefore, that 'they (the Egyptians) rebelled not against his word,' because the word came attended with such a flood of evidence that there was

16 And in very deed for [o] this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to shew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

17 As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

[o] Rom. 9. 17. See ch. 14. 17. Prov. 16. 4. I Pet. 2. 9.

a kind of moral paradox, or absurdity, or impossibility in supposing that it did not produce obedience, although such was indeed the fact. In the passage before us we conceive that God designs to assure Pharaoh, that considering his liability to have been cut off by the preceding plague, he may regard himself as having been in effect a dead man; 'nevertheless,' says he, 'for this cause have I raised thee up.' Heb. 'Have I *made thee to stand*;' i. e. have preserved thee safe in the midst of danger, 'for to show in thee, &c.' The word translated 'raised up' does not signify *to bring into existence*, but *to cause to stand, to make to continue*. Thus, 1 Kings, 15. 4, 'Nevertheless for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and *to establish* Jerusalem.' Heb. 'To make to stand,' i. e. to preserve. Prov. 29. 4, 'The king by judgment *establisheth* the land.' Heb. 'Makes to stand;' i. e. renders safe. So also Ex. 21. 21, 'If he continue a day or two.' Heb. 'If he *stand* a day or two;' i. e. survive. Paul, however, in quoting this passage, Rom. 9. 17, employs the term 'raised up,' which will occasion no difficulty, if it be borne in mind that a person may be said to be 'raised up' who is preserved alive when in danger of dying, a usage of the word which occurs James, 5. 15. 'And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord *shall raise him up*.' It was in this sense of being *spared from imminent destruction* that Pharaoh was raised up. Among the ancient versions the Chal. has 'For now it was near before me (i. e. it lacked but little) that I had sent out the stroke of my strength and thou hadst been consumed.' Arab. 'Because if I had given a loose to my power, I should have destroyed thee and thy people, and thou wouldst have been eradicated; but I have reserved, &c.' Taking the words in this sense we may gather, (1) That however men may forget or disregard former judgments, God remembers them, and that sooner or later he will remember his enemies of them. (2) That as a preservative against future tokens of divine displeasure, we do well to call often to mind the plagues and destructions from which we have very narrowly, and through the forbearance of heaven, escaped.

16. *To show in thee my power.* Heb. הראתך את כחי *haratheka eth kohi, to make thee see my power.* This is the strictly literal rendering, which is intimated by the word 'in' in our translation being printed in Italics. The Gr. however has εν σοι, *in thee*, which Paul also adopts, Rom. 9. 17, leaving us to infer that it is the true sense. Consequently הראתך *haratheka, make thee to see*, is an elliptical mode of expression for הראות בך *haroth beka, show in or by thee;* and instances of similar usage are easily adducible. Thus Gen. 30. 20, 'Now will my husband *dwell* (*with*) *me* (יזבלני *yizbeleni* for יזבל עמי *yizbal immi*).' Ps. 5. 4, 'Neither shall evil *dwell* (*with*) *thee* (יגורך *yegureka* for יגור עמך *yegur immeka*).' Prov. 8. 36, 'He that *sinneth* (*against*) *me* (חטאי *hotei* for חטא בי *hote bi*) wrongeth his own soul.'

17. *Exaltest thou thyself against my people?* Heb. מסתולל *mistolel*, from the root סלל *salal, to elevate* or *cast up*. The present term is the participle of Hithpael, or the *reflexive* voice, and seems to denote that *self-elevation* which resembles a rampart made to oppose an

18 Behold, to-morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.

19 Send therefore now, *and* gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field: *for upon* every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.

20 He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses:

21 And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.

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enemy. Gr. εμποιη, *thou insultest.* Chal. *id.* Syr. 'Thou detainest.' Arab. 'Thou hinderest.' Although Pharaoh was a powerful monarch, and God's people a poor, degraded, and enslaved race, yet it was to be to his ruin that he exalted himself against them, inasmuch as it was virtually exalting himself against God. No power is too high to be called to account for lording it despotically over 'the people of the saints of the Most High.'

18. *To-morrow about this time.* Gr. 'At this same hour.' The time is thus accurately specified, that the effect, when it occurred, might not be attributed to chance.——¶ *I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail.* As rain is exceedingly rare, and hail almost unknown in Egypt, so formidable a hailstorm as that predicted, would be one of the greatest marvels that could occur in a climate like that of Egypt. A heavy fall of snow in July, would not be so great a phenomenon in our own country, as a heavy hail-storm at any time in Egypt.——¶ *Since the foundation thereof.* Heb. לִמִּן הַיּוֹם הִוָּסְדָה *lemin hayom hivvasedah, since the day of its being founded.* That is, since its first being inhabited; otherwise expressed, v. 24, 'since it became a nation.' The Gr. however renders it, 'From the day of its being created,' i. e. physically created. It was at any rate to be a storm such as never had had a precedent in that country, and for the reason, that the occasion of it had never had a precedent. But unparalleled judgments may be expected to overtake unparalleled offenders.

19. *Send therefore now, and gather,* &c. Heb. שְׁלַח עֻז *haëz, gather speedily,* denoting an action to be performed with the utmost expedition, as is explained in the ensuing verse, 'made to flee.' With characteristic clemency the Lord couples with the prediction a gracious warning, to as many as will heed it, to send and gather their servants and cattle out of the field, and place them under shelter before the appointed time arrived. So unwilling is God that any should perish that even in the midst of impending wrath, he kindly provides and points out a way of escape.

21. *He that regarded not the word.* Heb. לֹא שָׂם לִבּוֹ *lo sam libbo, that set not his heart* to the word. Although there were some, even among the servants of Pharaoh, who had been sufficiently wrought upon by the former plagues to tremble at God's word, yet there were others, and they probably the majority, who partook of the spirit of their master, and would not believe, though the event thus far, had in every instance proved the truth of Moses' predictions. One would have thought that even if there were a *peradventure* that the calamity might come, they would have chosen the safer side, and housed their cattle for so short a time, rather than leave the poor creatures exposed to perish in the tempest; but they were so fool-hardy as in defiance of the truth of Moses and the power of God to risk the consequences.

22 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be [p] hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.

23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and [q] the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground: and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very griev-

[p] Rev. 16. 21.

[q] Josh. 10. 11. Ps. 18. 13. & 78. 47. & 105. 32. & 148. 8. Isa. 30. 30. Ezek. 38. 22. Rev. 8. 7.

23. *The Lord sent thunder and hail.* Heb. נתן קלת וברד *nathan koloth ubarad, gave voices and hail.* The Lord's 'voice,' is an expression often used as equivalent to 'thunder.' See Note on Gen. 3. 8. Thus Rev. 6. 1, 'And I heard as it were the *noise* (*φωνη, voice*) *of thunder.*' Rev. 10. 3, 'And when he had cried (the) seven *thunders* uttered their *voices.*'——¶ *The fire ran along upon the ground.* Heb. ארצה *aretzah, towards the earth.* This is the exact rendering, and there can be no doubt that the fire meant was the *lightning* that accompanied the hail. The Psalmist thus speaks of this judgment, Ps. 78. 47, 48, 'He destroyed their vines and their sycamore-trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail and their flocks to *hot thunderbolts.*' To this seventh plague of Egypt is compared the effect of the seventh vial of the Apocalypse; Rev. 16. 17—21, 'And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air . . . and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth . . . and there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent;' where in the mention of the hail-stones there is an allusion probably to the passage of Joshua, ch. 10. 11, 'The Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hail-stones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.'

24. *Fire mingled with the hail.* Heb. אש מתלקחת בתוך הברד *esh mithlakkahath bethok habbarad, fire catching hold, infolding, involving itself in the midst of the hail.* The words are no doubt intended to depict a complication of elemental terrors which it is not easy distinctly to conceive. Amid peals of deep and portentous thunder, the lightning gleamed with terrific flashes, and at the same time a tremendous hail-storm poured its fury over a land of which the inhabitants had probably never before witnessed or heard of a similar phenomenon. If a violent tempest or tornado is an appalling occurrence in countries where they are not uncommon, what overwhelming dread must this have produced in Egypt! How could they but imagine that heaven and earth were mingling together in wild confusion! And then, when its fury had somewhat abated, to behold the desolations it had caused! Men and cattle killed and promiscuously scattered over the fields—all kinds of trees, plants, and grain battered down and destroyed—and the whole face of the ground appearing to have been swept by the besom of destruction! And yet, to enhance the wonder still more, in the land of Goshen not a solitary vestige of the wide-spreading havoc was to be seen. Here all nature was smiling unruffled in its usual fertility and beauty. What a contrast between the verdant fields and tranquil flocks of the one region, and the fearful spectacle of scathing and ruin in the other! 'And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and

ous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

25 And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that *was* in the field, both man and beast, and the hail [r] smote every herb of the field and brake every tree of the field.

26 [s] Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, was there no hail.

[r] Ps. 105. 33. [s] ch. 8. 22. & 9. 4, 6. & 10. 23. & 11. 7. & 12. 13. Isai. 32. 18, 19.

27 ¶ And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, [t] I have sinned this time: [u] the LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked.

28 [x] Entreat the LORD (for *it is* enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

t ch. 10. 16. [u] 2 Chron. 12. 6. Ps. 129. 4 & 145. 17. Lam. 1. 18. Dan. 9. 14. [x] ch. 8 8, 28. & 10. 17. Acts 8. 24.

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in quiet resting-places, when it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be utterly abased.' No wonder that the visitation should, for a time at least, have overpowered the obduracy of Pharaoh, and prompted him to send in haste for Moses and Aaron, and address them in the language of the humbled penitent.

25. *The hail smote every herb of the field.* That is, some of all sorts, as is evident from Ex. 10. 15. Thus, Acts, 10. 12, 'Wherein were *all manner* of four-footed beasts of the earth.' Gr. παντα τα τετραποδα, *all four-footed beasts.*

27, 28. *I have sinned this time.* As it can hardly be supposed that Pharaoh intended to limit this confession of his sin to the present instance of his unbelief, we are no doubt authorized to extend the import of the phrase 'this time' to the whole course of his disobedience during the occurrence of the preceding plagues. This sense of the phrase strikingly confirms the interpretation put upon it in v. 14, as implying the time of a future series of judgments. Overcome by the tremendous display of the divine indignation which he had just witnessed, and which had proved fatal to many of his subjects, he confessed himself on the wrong side in his contest with the God of the Hebrews, declares that he has sinned in standing it out so long, and owns the equity of God's proceedings against him: 'The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Under the pressure of his convictions he humbles himself still farther, and entreats that this direful plague may at once be stayed, promising without any qualification that the people shall be dismissed. Perhaps he sincerely felt and intended all that he said at the time as the terror of the rod often extorts penitent acknowledgments from those that have no penitent affections; but the result proved that he knew little of the plague of his own heart, whatever he had been compelled to know of the plague of God's hand. Moses, however, though he evidently placed no reliance upon his promise, v. 30, did not hesitate to listen to his request, and engaged at once to obtain a cessation of the storm; thus teaching us that even those of whom we have little hopes, and who will probably soon repent of their repentance are still to be prayed for and admonished.——¶ *Righteous*, &c. Heb. הצדיק *hatz-tzaddik, the righteous one* — הרשעים *hareshaim, the sinners;* thus showing that the original is far more emphatic than our translation. It was equivalent to saying that he and his people fully deserved all that had been brought upon them.——¶ *Mighty thunderings.* Heb. קלת אלהים *koloth Elohim, voices of God;* i. e. loud and deafening peals of thunder, called voices or thunderings of God as 'mountains of God' are large and lofty mountains.

29 And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will [y] spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; *and* the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the [z] earth *is* the LORD's.

30 But as for thee and thy servants, [a] I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God.

31 And the flax and the barley was smitten: [b] for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* bolled.

32 But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they *were* not grown up.

33 And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and [c] spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.

34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

35 And [d] the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

[y] 1 Kings 8. 22, 38. Ps. 143. 6. Isai. 1. 15.
[z] Ps. 24. 1. 1 Cor. 10. 26, 28. [a] Isai. 26. 10.
[b] Ruth 1. 22. & 2. 23.
[c] ver. 29. ch. 8. 12. [d] ch. 4. 21.

See Note on Gen. 23. 6.——¶ *Shall stay no longer.* Heb. לֹא תוֹסִפוּן לַעֲמֹד *lo tosiphun laamod, shall not add to stand.* Chal. 'I will detain you no longer.'

29. *As soon as I am gone out of the city.* He would retire from the city not only for purposes of privacy, in his intercession with God, but also to show that he was not afraid to expose himself to the action of the elements in the open field. By thus venturing forth in the midst of the tempest with a perfect confidence of impunity, Moses gave to Pharaoh a striking proof that he was the special object of the divine protection, and consequently that his message ought to be diligently heeded.——¶ *That thou mayest know,* &c. That is, that thou mayest be convinced that the God of the Hebrews is no local deity like the fancied gods of Egypt, but the absolute and universal Sovereign, holding sway over all creatures, controlling the elements, and making every department of nature obsequious to his will. 'See what various methods God uses to bring men to their proper senses. Judgments are sent, and judgments removed, and all for the same end, to make men know that the Lord reigns.' *Henry.*

31. *The flax was bolled.* That is, podded. Heb. חִפְשָׁתָה גִבְעֹל *happishtah gibol.* The original word occurs only here, and its true import is not easily fixed. Nearly all the ancient versions understand it as intimating a stage of maturity in the flax in which it was past flowering. We think it probable that the genuine scope of the Heb. term expresses the formation of that small globous fruit, pod, or capsule on the top of the stalk of flax which succeeds the flower, and contains the seed. Gr. 'The flax was in seed, or seeding.' The Egyptians sowed all sorts of grain soon after the waters of the Nile had subsided; but flax and barley being of more rapid growth would at any given time be more forward than wheat and rye, which explains the circumstance mentioned in the text. The interval between the two harvests is usually about a month.

34, 35. *The thunders and the hail ceased.* The prayer of Moses was in this case invested with a power like that of Elias, and the two witnesses of the Apocalypse, James, 5. 17, 18. Rev. 11. 6, to open and shut heaven, and yet the mercy now accorded to Pharaoh tended as little to soften his heart as the previous judgment had done. As if the sun which now shone forth in the clear sky and hardened the soaked and saturated earth had produced a similar effect upon his heart, he is merely em-

CHAPTER X.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: [a] for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants; [b] that I might shew these my signs before him:

2 And that [c] thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I *am* the LORD.

3 And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to [d] humble thyself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me.

[a] ch. 4. 21. & 7. 14. [b] ch. 7. 4. [c] Deut. 4. 9. Ps. 44. 1. & 71. 18. & 78. 5, &c. Joel. 1. 3.

[d] 1 Kings 21. 29. 2 Chron. 7. 14. & 34. 27. Job 42. 6. Jer. 13. 18. James 4. 10. 1 Pet. 5. 6.

boldened by this respite of wrath to persist in a course of more determined rebellion. Yet the language of the text implies that this increased hardness of heart was an increased measure of guilt: 'He sinned yet more and more, and hardened his heart;' i. e. sinned by hardening his heart. God's foretelling the result, therefore, and permitting it, did not go to lessen his criminality.

CHAPTER X.

1. *Go in unto Pharaoh.* That is, to renew the demand so often made and so often resisted; though this is not in so many words asserted in the text. We infer what Moses was *orderéd* to say from what he *did* say. Wicked men are sometimes to be admonished even where there is no hope that they will be amended. But while the divine message was to be repeated, and new tokens of the vengeance of God denounced as shortly to appear before Pharaoh and his people, an additional reason is assigned for the fearful proceedings thus far and thenceforth recorded. God had providentially and permissively hardened the hearts of Pharaoh and his servants, in order to take occasion from the event for the display of such signs and miracles as would furnish a lesson never to be forgotten to his own people and to their posterity to the latest generation. And not to them only, for as the charge is given more immediately, though not exclusively to Moses, we may understand it as an intimation, that these miraculous inflictions were to be recorded and thus made in his writings a perpetual source of instruction, and admonition to the end of the world. This use they are in fact serving at this moment. Wherever the word of God is published abroad in the earth, there are these signal events made known, and there are they operating to impress the hearts of the children of men with an awful sense of the greatness of God and the danger of provoking him to jealousy.——¶ *Before him.* Heb. בקרבו *bekirbo, in the midst of him;* where the person of the king stands for the body of his people collectively. See Note on Gen. 14. 10. Gr. 'That yet my signs may come επ' αυτους *upon them.*' Chal. 'That I might set my signs in the midst of them;' i. e. of Pharaoh and his people. Syr. 'That I might do these my signs among them.'

3. *How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?* Gr. εως τινος ου βουλει εντραπηναι με; *how long wilt thou not reverence me?* This is the grand controversy of God with sinners, that they refuse at his bidding to humble themselves in penitent prostration before him. But to this point they must come at last, and the more voluntarily it is done the better. Pharaoh had indeed on former occasions made some pretences to humbling himself, but as he was neither sincere nor constant in it, it passed for nothing in God's esteem,

4 Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring the [e] locusts into thy coast:
5 And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and [f] they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field:
6 And they [g] shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

[e] Prov. 30. 27. Rom. 9. 3. [f] ch. 9. 32. Joel. 1. 4. & 2. 25.
[g] ch. 8. 3, 21.

and he is here addressed as if it were a duty which he had never yet performed in the least degree. Let us learn from this how little value God puts upon those religious acts in which the *heart* is wanting.

4, 5. *To-morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast.* Heb. חנני מביא מחר ארבה *hinneni mĕbi mahar arbeh, behold me bringing to-morrow the locust;* collect. sing. for plur. The original word for *locust* (ארבה *arbeh*) is derived from רבה *rabah, to be multiplied*, or *increased*. It carries, therefore, the import of *prodigious numbers*, Judg. 6. 5, Jer. 46. 23, and on this account immense swarms of locusts stand in the figurative style of the prophets for *multitudinous armies of men*. Thus when the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, Rev. 9. 3, 'There came out of the smoke of the bottomless pit *locusts* upon earth,' denoting the countless hordes of Saracens which arose in the commencement of the seventh century under Mohammed, and overran and depopulated a great portion of Christendom.——¶ *They shall cover the face of the earth.* Heb. את עין הארץ *eth ayin haaretz, the eye of the earth.* The phraseology is singular, but it is probably by metonymy of the faculty for the object, denoting that the *sight*, the *visibility*, of the earth should be hidden by the dense masses and layers of locusts. A phraseology of perhaps a similar import occurs, Zech. 5 6, in the description of the symbolical ephah; 'This is their *resemblance* through all the earth.' Heb. 'This is their *eye* through all the earth;' i. e. their aspect, their visible appearance. So also possibly Zech. 3. 9, 'Upon one stone shall be seven *eyes;*' i. e. a sevenfold aspect; it shall have the property of presenting under different circumstances seven distinct phases.—Swarms of this devouring insect had often before been the scourge of Egypt, but he was told that this irruption of them should be beyond all former precedent, and that their numbers, size, and voracity should be such, that they would eat up every vegetable production in the land. The wheat and the rye, it is clear, had escaped the ravages of the hail, ch. 9. 32, but they were now to be swept away by the locust, and whatever trees had been left with leaves upon their branches were now to be stript bare. ——¶ *Which neither thy fathers nor thy fathers' fathers have seen;* i. e. the like of which for numbers and ravages thy fathers have never seen; not that they had never seen locusts at all before.

6. *He turned himself and went out.* Seeing no reason to anticipate any better reception of his message than before. *Words* had hitherto passed between them without producing the desired results. Moses now left it with God to deal with him mainly by *acts*. It is a fearful point which the sinner has reached, when the messenger of God thinks it of very little consequence what his answer may be

7 And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be [h] a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: *but* who *are* they that shall go?

9 And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go: for [i] we *must hold* a feast unto the LORD.

10 And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will

[h] ch. 23. 33. Josh. 23. 13. 1 Sam. 18. 21. Eccles. 7. 26. 1 Cor. 7. 35.

[i] ch. 5. 1.

7. *And Pharaoh's servants said unto him.* That is, the principal men that were about him, his nobles and counsellors. After the loss and devastation which the preceding plague had occasioned, they ventured to remonstrate. ——¶ *How long shall this* man *be a snare unto us?* How long shall he prove the cause of leading us into fresh calamities? As, however, there is no separate word in the original to answer to 'man,' some have supposed the meaning to be, 'how long shall this thing, this affair, be a snare to us?' And with this the Gr. coincides, εως τινος εσται τουτο ημιν σκωλον, *how long shall this scandal be to us?* But were this the true sense, the original would doubtless be זאת *zoth* instead of זה *zeh*, which latter is the proper designation of a *person* instead of a *thing*. Our version is correct.——¶ *Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?* Hast thou not yet evidence enough from the calamities experienced, especially by the ravages of the late hail-storm, that the whole country is just upon the verge of destruction? If his own courtiers and counsellors were of this opinion, the king could not but infer that in the course he was now pursuing, he was no longer sustained by the general consent of the Egyptian people, who now lamented his obstinacy, and had become desirous that, as the least of many evils, the demand of the Israelites should be complied with. This consideration was not without its weight with the king. Perceiving the feeling that was entertained by his court and his subjects, he resolved so far to comply with their wishes as to have Moses and Aaron sent for and brought back, that he might at least ostensibly appear disposed to treat with them anew.——¶ *But who are they that shall go?* Heb. מי ומי המלכים *mi va-mi haholekim, who and who (are) going?* The repetition of the interrogative is emphatic, implying that he was to specify with the utmost distinctness who were to go, and who, if any, were to stay behind. Moses in reply tells him plainly that they were to serve God with their *all;* that their wives and their children, their flocks and their herds, without any exception or reservation, must go with them.

10. *And he said unto them, Let the Lord,* &c. This bold and positive declaration of Moses was too much for Pharaoh. Greatly exasperated by this uncompromising statement he answers in a style of mingled irony and wrath, 'Let the Lord do with you as I will let you go;' q. d. 'If this be the proposed condition of your going, that you take your little ones with you, then may the God whom you serve favor you as much with his presence as I do with my consent, and no more. In this case your prospects are sorry indeed.' It is a very strong and emphatic mode of denying them the permission which they sought. ——¶ *Look to it, for evil is before you.* It is doubted by commentators whether this is to be understood as a *threatening*

let you go, and your little ones: look *to it;* for evil is before you.

11 Not so: go now ye *that are* men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

12 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, [k] Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and [l] eat every herb of the land, *even* all that the hail hath left.

13 And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all *that* night: *and* when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

[k] ch. 7. 19.

[l] ver. 4. 5.

of evil to happen to them, or as an *accusation* of evil intended by them. Probably the words will admit the union of both senses; 'You are harboring an *evil* design, and are exposing yourselves to the *evil* of a corresponding punishment.' Gr. 'See that mischief is proposed by you.' Vulg. 'Who doubteth but that you intend very wickedly?' Chal. 'See how the evil which you were thinking to do shall return to your own faces.'

11. *Not so.* I do not consent to your going on these conditions.——¶ *Go now ye that are men.* 'Leave your women and children behind as a pledge for your safe return, and then you have my consent that the 'men,' all the adults of the congregation, should go, for this is the fair interpretation of your request; thus only did I understand it; thus far only will I comply with it.' Yet it is difficult to say what authority he had for such an assertion, as the foregoing narrative attributes no expression to Moses which would seem fairly capable of such a construction. It is possible he intended to say, that *that must have been Moses' meaning* when he asked permission to sacrifice unto Jehovah. But he had no right to attribute a sense to Moses' words which Moses did not design to convey, and then act as if it were the true sense.——¶ *And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.* Heb. וירגרש אותם *va-yegaresh otham, and one drove them out;* an instance of the phraseology in which a verb active is used indefinitely in the third person singular for the plural passive. See Note on Gen. 16. 14. 'Among natives of rank, when a person is very importunate or troublesome, when he presses for something which the former are not willing to grant, he is told to begone. Should he still persist, the servants are called, and the order is given, 'Drive that fellow out.' He is then seized by the *neck*, or taken by the *hands*, and *dragged* from the premises; he all the time *screaming* and *bawling* as if they were taking his *life*. Thus to be driven out is the greatest indignity which can be offered, and nothing but the most violent rage will induce a superior to have recourse to it.' *Roberts.*

12. *For the locusts, that they may come up.* Heb. בארבה וירצל *ba-arbeh va-yaal, for the locust, that he may come up;* collect. sing.

13. *The Lord brought an east wind upon the land.* Heb. נהג *nihag, conducted.* The word is remarkable, as it has the import of *guiding, leading, directing one's course.* The wind may be said to blow where it listeth; but then it listeth or chooseth only as God has ordered it. At his command it blows one day to bring up locusts, and on the next another to sweep them away. Though locusts are common in Arabia, they are comparatively rare in Egypt; the Red Sea forming a sort of barrier against them, as they are not formed for crossing seas, or for long flights. Yet on the present occasion they were

14 And [m] the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous *were they;* [n] before them

[m] Ps. 78. 46. & 105. 34.

[n] Joel 2. 2.

enabled, by the aid of a 'strong east wind,' to cross that sea from Arabia, which was another remarkable circumstance, as the winds which prevalently blow in Egypt are six months from the south, and six months from the north.

——¶ *Brought the locusts.* Heb. נשא *nasa, bore up, supported, sustained,* Syr. and Vulg. 'The burning rushing wind raised the locusts.' Considering what Pharaoh and his people had already suffered from the preceding plagues, this additional one must have been beyond measure afflictive. The dearth and desolation were now complete. Every leaf and blade of grass left from the previous ravages of the hail, were now devoured. It is difficult to conceive the devastating effects that follow when a cloud of hungry locusts, comes upon a country. They devour to the very root and bark, so that it is a long time before vegetation can be renewed. The account which M. Volney (Travels in Syria, vol. 1. p. 188) gives of the devastations of these insects, contains a striking illustration of this passage:— 'Their quantity is incredible to all who have not themselves witnessed their astonishing numbers; the whole earth is covered with them for the space of several leagues. The noise they make in browsing on the trees and herbage may be heard at a great distance, and resembles that of an army plundering in secret. The Tartars themselves are a less destructive enemy than these little animals. One would imagine that fire had followed their progress. Wherever their myriads spread, the verdure of the country disappears; trees and plants stripped of their leaves and reduced to their naked boughs and stems, cause the dreary image of winter to succeed in an instant to the rich scenery of spring. When these clouds of locusts take their flight, to surmount any obstacles, or to traverse more rapidly a desert soil, the heavens may literally be said to be obscured with them.' To this may be added the narrative of a similar visitation in the Canary Islands described by an eye-witness, about two centuries ago. 'The air was so full of them, that I could not eat in my chamber without a candle; all the houses being full of them, even the stables, barns, chambers, garrets, and cellars. I caused cannon-powder and sulphur to be burnt to expel them, but all to no purpose; for when the door was opened an infinite number came in, and the others went out, fluttering about; and it was a troublesome thing when a man went abroad to be hit on the face by those creatures, so that there was no opening one's mouth but some would get in. Yet all this was nothing, for when we were to eat, these creatures gave us no respite; and when we cut a bit of meat, we cut a locust with it; and when a man opened his mouth to put in a morsel, he was sure to chew one of them. I have seen them at night, when they sit to rest them, that the roads were four inches thick of them, one upon another; so that the horses would not trample over them, but as they were put on with much lashing, pricking up their ears, snorting and treading fearfully. The wheels of our carts and the feet of our horses bruising these creatures, there came forth from them such a stench as not only offended the nose, but the brain. I was not able to endure it, but was forced to wash my nose with vinegar, and hold a handkerchief dipped in it continually at my nostrils.' *Gallaudet's Life of Moses,* vol. 1. p. 114, See also 'Scrip. Illust.' p. 551.

14. *The locusts went up over all the land.* From the following passages in

there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.

15 For they [o] covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they [p] did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in

[o] ver. 5. [p] Ps. 105. 35.

the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

16 ¶ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, [q] I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.

17 Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and [r] entreat the LORD your God that

[q] ch. 9. 27. [r] ch. 9. 28. 1 Kings 13. 6.

the Psalms some have thought that the locusts were accompanied by countless swarms of caterpillars. Ps. 78. 46, 'He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labor unto the locust.' Ps. 105. 34, 'He spake, and the locusts came, and the caterpillars, and that without number.' But it is now generally admitted that the original terms merely imply *different species* of locusts.——¶ *Before them there were*, &c. This has been thought to be inconsistent with Joel, 2. 2, when in speaking of an invading army of locusts the prophet says, 'A great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.' To this Abarbanel, the Jewish critic, answers, that Moses' words are to be understood of the country of Egypt only; that there never was before and never was to be again such a plague of locusts *there*. But Rosenmuller contends that this is no more than a common hyperbolical and proverbial mode of speech, which is not to be pressed to the utmost strictness of its import. He adduces the following instances of parallel usage. 2 Kings, 18. 5, 'He (Hezekiah) trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.' 2 Kings, 23. 25, 'And like unto him (Josiah) was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.' Here indeed it is not easy to see how the same thing could consistently be said of these two different kings, except on the ground of the correctness of Rosenmuller's remark. On the same principle we are perhaps to interpret the two prophetical declarations of Daniel and our Savior; Dan. 12. 1, 'And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.' Mat. 24. 21, 'For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.' It may indeed be affirmed that the two predictions refer to the same time, which is indeed possible, though not certain.

15. *Covered the face of the whole earth.* Heb. עין כל הארץ *ayin kol haaretz, the eye of the whole earth.* See Note on v. 5.——¶ *The land was darkened.* Heb. ארץ *eretz*, the same word as in the preceding clause. Either the surface of the ground was so covered as to be hidden from sight, so making the phrase exegetical of the preceding; or, which is preferable, the immense clouds of them in the air intercepted the sun's rays, and thus darkened the land. Chal. 'They covered all the land so that the sun-beams could not pierce to it, and the land was obscured.'

16, 17. *Then Pharaoh called.* Heb. ימהר לקרא *yemaher likro, hastened to call.* So formidable was this calamity

he may take away from me this death only.

18 And he [s] went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD.

19 And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind which took away the locusts, and cast them [t] into the Red sea: there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.

20 But the LORD [u] hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

21 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, [x] Stretch out thine hand toward

[s] ch. 8. 30. [t] Joel. 2. 20.

[u] ch. 4. 21. & 11. 10. [x] ch. 9. 22.

that although Pharaoh had previously driven Moses and Aaron from his presence, yet he is now constrained to send for them again, to avow his fault, and to beg for one reprieve more. His confession now has more the air of unfeigned repentance than on any former occasion. He acknowledges that he had sinned against God and his servants, humbly asks their forgiveness, and sues for their intercession. Only let him be forgiven *this once*, only let him be delivered from *this* death, and there should be no more cause for complaint. Alas! there are but too many who upon reading this will be reminded of something similar in their own case; too many who will recollect in the hour of sickness and in the fear of death, to have prayed to be delivered *only this once*, with promises of amendment, but who yet upon recovery have returned, Pharaoh-like, to their former impenitence, worldliness, and sin. But let it not be forgotten that these repeated lapses and broken vows are all the while swelling our guilt to fearful dimensions, and making us more and more ripe for a sudden destruction.——¶ *This death.* That is, *this deadly plague.* Thus, 2 Kings, 4. 40, 'And they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is *death* in the pot;' i. e. something *deadly.* The plague of the locusts was in itself deadly in the sense of *having been destructive;* but it is probable that Pharaoh alluded rather to its *apprehended* consequences. He may have supposed, that famine and pestilence causing a general mortality would follow in the train of the ravages of the locusts. However this may be, he deprecates the plague of locusts more than the plague of his own heart, which was much more deadly. But this is one of the thousand cases continually occurring, where men are more anxious to be delivered from their troubles than their sins, and cry upon their beds only from acuteness of bodily pain or fear of hell. They shrink and writhe under the consequences of their transgressions, but they do not hate and repent of the transgressions themselves.

19. *The Lord turned a mighty strong west wind.* Heb. רוח ים חזק מאד *ruah yam hazak meod, a sea-wind strong exceedingly.* The Hebrews denominated the West from the Mediterranean sea, which lay to the west of Palestine.——¶ *Cast them.* Heb. ויתקעהו *yithkaëhu, fastened them;* i. e. they were so cast or driven into the sea, that as to the event, it was as if they had been 'fastened,' like a tent which is pitched and fast nailed to the ground. This complete removal of the locusts was as miraculous as the bringing them on.——¶ *Into the Red Sea.* Heb. ים סוף *yam suph, Sea of Suph,* or *weedy sea, sea of rushes,* from the great quantities of sea-weeds and flags which abound upon its shores. It is called 'Red Sea' from its bordering upon the country of Edom, which, in the Hebrew tongue signifies 'red.'

21. *Even darkness which may be felt.* Heb. וימש חשך *va-yamesh hoshek, that one may feel darkness;* the same word in the original with that used to express the 'darkness' which covered the deep at the time of the six days' creation.

heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt.

22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there was a [y] thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

23 They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for

[y] Ps. 105. 28.

It was a darkness consisting of thick, clammy fogs, of vapors and exhalations so condensed that they might almost be perceived by the organs of touch. Some commentators, supposing that human life could not be sustained an hour in such a medium, imagine that instead of 'darkness that may be felt,' the Heb. phrase may signify a darkness in which men went groping and feeling about for every thing they wanted. But something of a hyperbolical character may be allowed for expressions of this kind, which are not to be pared to the quick. Considering that the sun was one of the deities of Egypt, and that in that country *any* darkening of his light in the day time is an extremely rare occurrence, we may imagine the consternation that would sieze upon the inhabitants at such a phenomenon. The cloud of locusts which had previously darkened the land were nothing compared with this. It was truly 'an horror of thick darkness.'

22. *There was a thick darkness.* Heb. חשך אפלה *hoshek aphëlah, darkness of obscurity or gloom;* i. e. a darkness of preternatural density. The expression in the original is peculiarly emphatic, and is, therefore, rendered in the Gr. by three words, 'darkness, thick blackness, and tempestuous gloom.' The description which the author of the Book of Wisdom, chap. 17. 2, 3, 21, gives of their inward terrors and consternation may not be altogether conjectural: 'They were not only prisoners of darkness and fettered with the bonds of a long night, but were horribly astonished likewise and troubled with strange apparitions.' Compare with Moses' account of the ninth plague, the woe of the fifth apocalyptic vial, Rev. 16. 10, 'And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for anguish.'

23. *Neither rose any from his place.* Heb. מתחתיו *mittahtav, from that which was under him.* Gr. εκ της κοιτης αυτου, *from his bed.* The meaning probably is, that no one went out of his house to attend to his usual business. It is probable too that they were prevented by the heavy and humid state of the atmosphere from availing themselves of any kind of artificial light. So Wisdom, chap. 17. 5, 'No power of fire might give light.' We can scarcely conceive a more distressing situation; yet as Pharaoh and his people had rebelled against the light of God's word, conveyed to them by Moses, it was a righteous thing with God thus to punish them with a sensible pre-intimation of that 'blackness of darkness' which enters into the misery of the damned.——¶ *The children of Israel had light in their dwellings.* Again God put a marked difference between his enemies and his people. Well is it said of this miracle in the apocryphal book above quoted, ch. 17. 20, 21, 'The whole world shined with clear light, and none were hindered in their labor; over them only (the Egyptians) was spread a heavy night, an image of that darkness which should afterwards receive them: but yet were they unto themselves more grievous than the darkness!' In allusion, perhaps, to the gracious discrimination here spoken of we find the promise, Is. 60. 1, 2, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall

three days: [z] but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

24 ¶ And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and [a] said, Go ye, serve the LORD: only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your [b] little ones also go with you.

25 And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices, and burnt-

[z] ch. 8. 22. [a] ver. 8. [b] ver. 10.

arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.' Yet a greater difference will hereafter be made between the righteous and the wicked, between those that fear God, and those that fear him not. While the light of his countenance and the glory of his heaven shall exhilarate and rejoice the former, in that state which needs not sun or moon to enlighten it, the wicked shall endure the total loss of day, and dwell darkling in perpetual night. There is even now an earnest of the final diversity of lot. The darkness of ignorance and sin enshrouds the one, and the night of nature clouds all their perceptions; while the bright shining of the sun of righteousness sheds its kindly and refreshing beams upon the other.

24. *And Pharaoh called unto Moses.* That is, after the lapse of three days of darkness.——¶ *Go ye, serve the Lord, only let the flocks,* &c. The visitation of the darkness, so well calculated to appal and terrify the Egyptians, compelled the king to relax his previous determination. Still he is bent on a compromise. He will now permit the children also to go, but the flocks and the herds must be stayed behind as a security for their return. Thus it is that sinners are disposed to make terms with the Almighty, instead of yielding cheerfully to *all* his demands. They will consent, under the pressure of judgments, to part with *some* of their sins, but not all. They would rather retain them all, if they could do it consistently with their hope of heaven. If they

offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God.

26 Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.

27 ¶ But the LORD [c] hardened

[c] ver. 20. ch. 4. 21. & 14. 4, 8.

do part with any, it is with the utmost reluctance, like the mariner who casts his goods overboard to lighten his ship and keep it from sinking. But while Pharaoh would plead for some abatement, and shrinks from obeying the Lord *wholly*, Moses, instead of receding an iota from his previous demand, grows bolder as the crisis approaches, and declares that not only shall the children go, but also that there shall not an 'hoof be left behind.'

25. *Thou must give us also sacrifices.* Heb. תתן בידנו *titten be-yadenu, shalt give in, or into, our hands.* It is not probably to be understood from this that Moses demanded that animals for sacrifice should be given to them from the flocks and herds of the Egyptians, but that he should freely *allow them to take their own;* that he should throw no obstacle in the way of their taking their stock of cattle with them. To give into their hands, therefore, is equivalent to leaving in their power and at their disposal. This is evident from the drift of the next verse.

26. *Not an hoof be left behind.* The exact and punctilious obedience of Moses to every item of the divine commandment is here displayed, as an example from following which we should be deterred by no persecution or tyranny of men. The 'not leaving an hoof behind' intimated their full and complete egress from Egyptian bondage, leaving nothing to tempt them to return.

27. *He would not let them go.* Heb.

Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

28 And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more: for in *that* day thou seest my face, thou shalt die.

29 And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, [d] I will see thy face again no more.

CHAPTER XI.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague *more* upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you

[d] Hebr. 11. 27.

לֹא אָבָה *lo abah, was not willing, was not persuaded, did not consent,* to let them go. This word, strongly indicative of the *wilfulness* of the king, occurs here for the first time in the whole narrative.

28. *Get thee from me,* &c. 'Has a servant, an agent, or an officer, deeply offended his superior, he will say to him, 'Take care never to see my face again; for on the day you do that, evil shall come upon you.' 'Begone, and in future never look in this *face,*' pointing to his own.' *Roberts.* The firmness of Moses exasperated Pharaoh beyond measure. He here shows himself frantic with disappointment and rage. He not only dismisses the unwelcome messenger with indignation, from his court, but forbids, upon pain of death, the beholding his face again. A desperate madness and an impotent malice are alike conspicuous in this angry order. Had he not had abundant evidence that Moses could plague him without seeing his face? Had he not had time to discover that an almighty power was working with Moses, and that it was idle to threaten *him* with death, who was the special charge of Omnipotence? But to what length of daring impiety will not a hardened heart bring the presumptuous rebel!

29. *I will see thy face again no more.* It is a sad farewell when God, in the persons of his servants, refuses any more to see the face of the wicked; especially if in so doing he yields to their desires. For the manner in which this is to be reconciled with the subsequent history, see Note on Ex. 11. 1—3.

CHAPTER XI.

1. *And the Lord said unto Moses.* Rather perhaps, 'The Lord *had said* unto Moses.' From v. 8, it appears that Moses, after announcing the eighth plague, went out from Pharaoh in great anger, and yet previously in ch. 10. 29, he is represented as saying to Pharaoh, 'I will see thy face again no more.' It is consequently to be inferred that the present judgment was denounced to the king before the close of the last-mentioned interview, and the information respecting it communicated to Moses some time previous to that interview. The true construction undoubtedly is to consider the first three verses of this chapter as a mere parenthesis, and to connect ch. 11. 4, with ch. 10. 29, as a continuation of the same train of narrative. Otherwise there is very great confusion in the incidents detailed. The connexion between this and the last verse of the preceding chapter is undoubtedly very close, however loose at first sight it may appear. Moses does in effect in these words state the ground of the confident and peremptory tone which he assumed in his reply to Pharaoh. They give us to understand that it was not of his own motion that he then intimated that that should be their last interview; for we cannot suppose that it was optional with Moses whether to continue or to break off the negociations with Pharaoh. Unless divinely instructed to the contrary, how did he know but that God would have him carry another message to the king in despite of his lordly interdict? From this passage we learn that he *was* thus in-

go hence: [a] when he shall let *you* go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, [b] jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

[a] ch. 12. 31, 33, 39.

[b] ch. 3. 22. & 12. 35.

tructed,—that God had informed him that the contest with Pharaoh was just about to close,—that with one plague more he would complete the deliverance of Israel.——¶ *Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh.* Fearful and wonderful had been the plagues which the Lord had already brought upon Egypt, but before Moses retires from the royal presence he has one more, and but one, judgment to denounce to the incorrigible king. It was of portentous import, and might well make the ears of the haughty rebel to tingle. The solemn manner in which it is announced to Moses reminds us that whatever awful succession of plagues we may have thus far endured, God may still have one in reserve which shall do more execution than all the preceding.

2. *Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow*, &c. Heb. ישאלו *yishalu, ask, demand.* On the import of the term see Note on Ex. 3. 22. We are by no means satisfied that Moses was required to *command* the people to practise the device here mentioned. We regard it rather, as far as *they* were concerned, as the mere *prediction* of a fact which should occur. Moses, we conceive, was here directed as a private individual, and probably in a covert manner (whence the Gr. has, 'speak therefore *privily* in the ears;' i. e. in a *private*, not in a *public*, capacity), to *start the suggestion* among the people that the present was a favorable opportunity to obtain some measure of that remuneration for years of unrequited service to which they were justly entitled. The grounds of this proceeding are given in the ensuing verse, which is to be taken in immediate connection with what goes before, as a statement of the reason which existed to give countenance and secure success to the measure proposed. Both Moses and the people were now in high estimation with the Egyptians, from its having been so clearly evinced that they were the special objects of a divine interposition, and accounting this as a providential intimation they were led to avail themselves of the favorable impressions of their enemies to obtain a partial redress for their wrongs. As to the true import of the original word for 'borrow,' it is, as before remarked, ch. 3. 22, that of *asking, demanding, soliciting*, without expressly implying a promise of restoration, although it cannot be denied that there are cases where it legitimately imports the act of *borrowing*, as Ex. 22. 14, 2 Kings 6. 5. But in the present instance it is obvious that the Egyptians were as voluntary and as forward in giving as the Israelites were in receiving, there being no bribe which they were not willing to offer, in order to free themselves from the presence of men whom they regarded as the cause of their calamities, and the natural effect of the terrible inflictions which they had just sustained, would be, for the time, to render the precious things which the Hebrews required of small value in their sight. When we consider for how long a period the Israelites had been impoverished that the Egyptians might be enriched, and that now being about to quit the land of their sojourning with only so much of their effects as they could 'bind up in their clothes upon their shoulders,' all the property which they left behind would naturally fall into the hands of their oppressors, we cannot deem it inconsistent with the divine perfections that

3 [c] And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man [d] Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

4 And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, [e] About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt:

5 And [f] all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that *is* behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts.

[c] ch. 3. 21. & 12. 36. Ps. 106. 46. [d] 2 Sam. 7. 9. Esther 9. 4. [e] ch. 12. 12, 23, 29. Amos 5. 17.

[f] ch. 12. 12, 29. Amos 4. 10.

this mode of possessing themselves of their dues should be suggested to an injured people. They took no more than they received, they received no more than they demanded, and they demanded no more than that to which they were justly entitled. Josephus says, 'They also honored the Hebrews with *gifts*, some in order to get them to depart quickly, and others on account of their neighborhood and the friendship they had with them.' It is evident from ch. 12. 35, 36, that this account of the borrowing of the jewels is inserted here by anticipation, as the fact did not occur till some time afterward. This confirms still farther the idea above suggested that these verses are parenthetical.

3. *The Lord gave the people favor*, &c. The influence which should produce the effect here described was too signal and marvellous not to be ascribed directly to a divine source. The Psalmist informs us Ps. 105. 25, that the hearts of the Egyptians were turned to hate the chosen people, and here we find the secret agency of heaven controlling the spirits of his enemies, and prompting them to bestow favors where they might rather be expected to vent malice. But God very often mollifies the hearts which he does not sanctify, and realizes to his afflicted people what is said, Ps. 106. 46, 'He made them also to be pitied of all them that carried them captive.' By the same working of his overruling providence he made Moses also 'great' in the esteem of the people of Egypt, and thus rendered the reverence and awe which his miracles had inspired tributary to the enriching his people. The 'servants' and the 'people' here spoken of are undoubtedly both to be understood of the Egyptians.

4. *And Moses said.* That is, to Pharaoh, in continuation of ch. 10. 29, before he left the royal presence. — ¶ *About midnight will I go out*, &c. Heb. כַּחֲצֹת אֲנִי יוֹצֵא *ani yotzĕ, I going out*; the present future participle. Chal. 'I will be revealed in the midst of Egypt.' Arab. 'I will make my Angel to walk through the country of Egypt.' God was now to go forth, as he is elsewhere said to come down, in the execution of his judgments. The language represents God himself as the immediate author of the tremendous calamity about to be inflicted. Hitherto he had plagued Egypt by means and instruments: 'Stretch out thine hand;' 'Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod.' But now it is, 'I will go out into the midst of Egypt.' As mercies coming immediately from the hand of our heavenly Father are sweeter and better than those that are communicated through the medium of the creature; so the judgments issuing directly from the stores of the divine wrath, are more terrible and overwhelming than those which come through any created agency.

5. *All the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die.* It is scarcely possible to conceive a denunciation fraught with elements of more terror than this. Had the whole Egyptian nation been doomed

to utter extinction, it would indeed have been a judgment of greater magnitude, and have produced a deeper impression upon those that should have beheld it; but then one part of the people would not have survived to experience the anguish of being so fearfully separated from the other. As it was, it was to be attended with the most heart-rending aggravations. It was to be a blow which should wound there where the heart is most susceptible. The pride, the hope, the joy of every family was to be taken from them. The bitterness of fathers and mothers for their first-born is proverbial. Here were Egyptian parents soon to be found weeping for their children 'because they were not.' It was to be a woe without alleviation and without remedy. He that is sick may be restored. A body emaciated or ulcerated, maimed or enfeebled, may again recover soundness and strength. But what kindly process can reanimate the breathless clay, and give back to the arms of mourning affection an only son, a first-born, stricken with death! Hope, the last refuge and remedy under other evils, was here to be cut up by the roots. Again, the blow was to be struck at midnight, when none could see the hand that inflicted it, and most were reposing in quiet sleep. Had this sleep been silently and insensibly exchanged for the sleep of death, the circumstances would have been less overwhelmingly awful. But it was not to be so. Although for three days and nights previously they had been enveloped in thick darkness, and none had risen up from their places, yet now they were to be aroused from their beds to render what fruitless aid they could to their expiring children, and to mourn over their slain. What consternation and woe could be equal to this? To be prematurely awakened out of sleep by the dying groans of a near relative suddenly smitten; to be presented with the ghastly image of death in a darling object lately seen and enjoyed in perfect health; to be forced to the acknowledgment of the great and holy Lord God by such a fearful demonstration of his presence and power! But this was not all. The universality of the woe was to be such as greatly to enhance its horrors. From every house the cry of misery was to burst forth. The mighty leveller was to invade all ranks and conditions. The prince and the peasant, the master and the slave, were alike to confess the destructiveness of his march. And then to crown the whole was the keen reflection, that all this accumulated distress *might have been prevented*. How would they now condemn their desperate madness in provoking a power which had so often and so forcibly warned them of their danger? If Pharaoh were not past feeling, how dreadful must have been the pangs which he felt in the thought that after attempting to destroy, by unheard of cruelties, an innocent and helpless race of strangers, he had now ruined his own country by his obstinate perseverance in impiety and folly? With what anguish must he have beheld his own hopes blasted in their dearest object, the heir of his throne and empire, because he regarded not the claims of humanity in the treatment of his vassals? But see the judgment more fully considered in the Note on Ex. 12. 29.——¶ *From the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne.* That is, the first-born whose right it would have been to sit upon the throne of the kingdom as a successor to his father. Modern interpreters for the most part refer the expression 'that sitteth upon his throne' to Pharaoh, but the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan understand it of the heir apparent—qui sessurus est super thronum regni ejus, *who is to sit upon the throne of his kingdom.*——¶ *The maid-servant that is behind the mill.* 'Most families,' says Shaw (Travels, p. 231) speaking of the Moors in Barbary, 'grind their wheat and barley

6 g And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.

7 h But against any of the children of Israel i shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

8 And k all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

g ch. 12. 30. Amos 5. 17. h ch. 8. 22. i Josh. 10. 21.

k ch. 12. 33.

at home, having two portable millstones for that purpose; the uppermost of which is turned round by a small handle of wood or iron that is placed in the rim. When this stone is large, or expedition is required, then a second person is called in to assist; and as it is usual for the women alone to be concerned in this employment, who seat themselves over against each other with the millstones between them, we may see not only the propriety of the expression, Ex. 11. 5, of 'sitting behind the mill,' but the force of another, Mat. 24. 40, that 'two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left.' Sir John Chardin also remarks, that 'they are female slaves who are generally employed in the East at these hand-mills; that this work is extremely laborious, and esteemed the lowest employment in the house.' Thus, we find a translation from the highest honor to the lowest degradation described in the following terms, Is. 47. 1, 2, 'Come down and sit in the dust O virgin, daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground—*take the millstones and grind meal.*'

6. *And there shall be a great cry.* A cry of lamentation and mourning, and anguish, a loud and universal wailing, such as never was and never should be paralleled in that land. The latter clause of the verse is probably to be interpreted on the same principle with that of ch. 10. 14.

7. *Shall not a dog move his tongue.* A proverbial expression for the most profound tranquillity, implying that nothing should occur to harm or affright them; they should abide in peace and safety. —— ¶ *Doth put a difference.* Heb. יפלה *yapleh, wonderfully distinguisheth.* See Note on Ex. 8. 22.

8. *Shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying,* &c. Moses has thus recited the words of God's message to Pharaoh, but here he begins to speak in his own person, announcing the speedy submission of Pharaoh's servants to *him*, and their humble and earnest request that he should 'depart out of their coasts.' At the same time, we must bear in mind that Moses says this in his *representative* character, and that it is *to the Most High in Moses* that this submission was to be made. It is indeed wonderful to see God thus identifying himself with a creature of clay who speaks in his name, and yet it is unquestionable that the Scriptures afford repeated instances of the same usage of speech. —— ¶ *All the people that follow thee.* Heb. אשר ברגליך *asher beraglĭka, who are at thy feet.* An expressive phrase, of which see the import explained in the Notes on Gen. 49. 10, and Judg. 4. 10. Gr. 'Whom thou leadest.' Chal. 'Who are with thee.' Vulg. 'Who are subject to thee.' Aben Ezra, 'Who are in thy power.' Jarchi, 'Who follow thy counsel and thy steps.' —— ¶ *Went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.* Heb. בחרי אף *bohori aph, in a heat of anger.* His indignation was justly moved at the repeated falsehoods of the king, at his

9 And the LORD said unto Moses, [l] Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that [m] my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.

10 And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; [n] and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

[l] ch. 3. 19. & 7. 4. & 10. 1. [m] ch. 7. 3.

[n] ch. 10. 20, 27. Rom. 2. 5. & 9. 22.

mercenary and cruel disposition, and at the insolent manner in which he had himself been treated by him. But it was mainly in view of the indignity put upon the messages of God that his spirit was stirred. He saw in him a proud, obstinate, audacious opposer of the God of heaven, one who had resisted warnings and convictions, judgments and mercies; one who would not yield to the divine authority to save all the first-born of his kingdom, and who was now rushing headlong to his ruin. No wonder that he was provoked with a holy indignation at his enormous sin, and angered, as our Savior himself afterwards was, 'at the hardness of his heart.' But it was a being angry and sinning not. 'To be angry at nothing but sin, is the way not to sin in anger.' *Henry.*

9, 10. *And the Lord said unto Moses*, &c. Rather, 'The Lord *had said*.' These two concluding verses appear to be designed as a kind of general recapitulation of the main incidents of the preceding narrative, of which the scope is to inform the reader that every thing took place just as God had predicted. In obedience to the divine command Moses and Aaron had performed all their wonders before the king and his court, and yet according to the previous intimation, Pharaoh had turned a deaf ear, and presented an obdurate heart, to all these exhibitions and appeals, most stubbornly refusing to let the people go from under his yoke. It was proper to make this statement to preclude any lurking impression that such an amazing demonstration of divine power had been put forth *in vain*, or that Omnipotence had been *baffled* in the contest. Far from it. Every thing had resulted just as God had foretold. The incredulity and obstinacy of men is sometimes made known beforehand, that it may not be a surprise or a stumbling-block when it happens.

CHAPTER XII.

We have in the present chapter an account of the execution of the fearful judgment threatened in the preceding, and in that event of the removal of the last obstacle in the way of the exit of the Israelites from Egypt. The slaughter of the first-born ended for the present the controversy with Pharaoh, though his subsequent infatuation brought the final stroke of justice upon him in his overthrow in the Red Sea. Previously however to detailing the incidents of this awful providence, the historian pauses to give us an account of the institution of the Passover, which God himself ordained, not only as a present means of safety to his own people while the judgment went through the land, but also as a permanent memorial of the event of their deliverance. As such the ordinance is perhaps the most remarkable of all the festivals of the Jewish church, and that which is more frequently mentioned in the New Testament than any other. It consisted of three parts; (1) The killing and eating of the paschal lamb. (2) The sprinkling of the blood upon the door-posts, spoken of as a distinct thing, Heb. 11. 28, and peculiar to the first passover. (3) The feast of unleavened bread for seven days following. The details will come before us as we proceed, to which will be appended suitable moral reflections at the close.

CHAPTER XII.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

2 [a] This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you.

3 ¶ Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house:

[a] ch. 13. 4. Deut. 16. 1.

1. *And the Lord spake*, &c. Better rendered 'the Lord *had* spoken,' for this order was given anterior to Moses' last interview with Pharaoh, and probably prior to the three days' darkness, as is inferrible from the fact of the paschal lamb being required to be made ready the fourth day before it was killed. We suppose, therefore, that the above direction was given to Moses on the ninth or tenth day of the month when the Passover was immediately provided; then followed the three days' darkness; on the thirteenth Moses appeared for the last time before Pharaoh; and on the fourteenth the Passover was eaten.

2. *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months.* Heb. ראש חדשים *rosh hodoshim, the head of months;* not only first in order, but highest in estimation; the chief and most excellent month of the year. This month had formerly been reckoned the seventh, but was henceforth to stand the first of the *ecclesiastical* year, while the *civil* year remained unaltered, commencing in Tisri or September. Thus Josephus: 'Moses appointed that Nisan should be the first month; so that this month began the year, *as to all the solemnities they observed in honor of God*, although they preserved the original order of the months as to buying and selling, and other ordinary affairs.' This year had formerly begun from the middle of September; it was henceforward to begin from the middle of March. This alteration of style was the special appointment of God, whose prerogative Antichrist usurps when he 'thinks to change times and laws.'

3. *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel.* Upon retiring from Pharaoh's presence Moses had undoubtedly withdrawn to the land of Goshen to make arrangements for the departure of his people, which he now saw to be close at hand. They had probably been gathering thither by degrees, and unconsciously perhaps forming themselves into an immense caravan, ready to move at an hour's warning. It is consequently to the 'congregation,' the assembled mass of Israel, that the order is here given, and there can be no doubt that the judgments recently exercised upon the Egyptians, with the manner in which their own affairs had been conducted, had for the present made the Israelites very tractable, and disposed them to receive and follow the directions of Moses with the utmost deference and respect. The order for observing a religious ordinance in such circumstances as the Israelites were now in, in the midst of the hurry and bustle of their preparations for departure, teaches us that whatever the urgency of the business or cares that occupy us, still the claims of religion are paramount, and that *nothing* should crowd out the duties of worship and devotion from our minds.—¶ *Take to them every man a lamb.* Heb. שה *seh*, which implies either a *lamb* or a *kid*, as appears from v. 5.—¶ *According to the house of their fathers.* The whole host of Israel was divided into twelve *tribes;* these tribes into *families;* and the families into *houses;* the last being composed of particular individuals. In one family, therefore, there might be several *houses.*

4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls: every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

5 Your lamb shall be [b] without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep or from the goats:

6 And ye shall keep it up until the [c] fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

[b] Lev. 22. 19, 20, 21. Mal. 1. 8, 14. Hebr. 9. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 19.

[c] Lev. 23. 5. Numb. 9. 3. & 28. 16. Deut. 16. 1, 6.

4. *According to the number of the souls.* As to the requisite number necessary to constitute what was termed the 'paschal society,' which Moses does not specify, some light is gathered from the following passage of Josephus: (J. W. B. 6. ch. 9. § 3.) 'These high-priests did so upon the coming of that feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till the eleventh; but so that a company of *not less than ten* belonged to every sacrifice: (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves;) and many of us are *twenty in a company.*' ——¶ *Every man according to his eating.* Heb. איש לפי אכלו *ish lephi oklo, every man according to the mouth of his eating.* That is, in making out a suitable number to participate of the lamb, or form the paschal society, ye shall include every one who is capable of eating a certain quantity, to the exception of the sick, the very aged, and the very young. This quantity the Jewish writers say was to be equal to the size of an olive.

5. *Without blemish.* Heb. תמים *tamim, perfect;* i. e. entire, whole, sound, having neither defect nor redundancy of parts, unsoundness of members, or deformity of aspect. See this more fully explained, Lev. 22. 21—24. This has a typical reference to Christ, who is called, 1 Pet. 1. 19, 'A Lamb without blemish and without spot.'——¶ *A male of the first year.* Heb. בן שנה *ben shanah, son of a year.* A male, as being accounted more excellent than a female, Mal. 1. 14; and of the first year, because it retains during that period its lamb-like harmlessness and simplicity. The phrase implies rather a lamb that falls somewhat short of a full year, than one that has reached it. It was probably taken at the age when its flesh was most tender and grateful.

6. *Ye shall keep it up.* Heb. והיה לכם למשמרת *ve-hayah lakem lemishmereth, it shall be to you for a keeping, or reservation.* It was to be singled out from the rest of the flock on the tenth day of the month, and kept apart till the fourteenth, when it was to be slain.——¶ *The whole assembly of the congregation shall kill it.* Not that the whole assembly of the congregation were to kill one lamb, but each house their several lambs. As this however was to be done throughout the whole congregation, at the same time, it is spoken of as a single act, and the collective singular for the plural employed.——¶ *Shall kill it in the evening.* Heb. בין הערבים *ben ha-arbayim, between the two evenings.* That is, in the afternoon between the time of the sun's beginning to decline, which was called the first evening, and that of his setting, which was termed the second. The usual time doubtless was the middle point between noon and sunset, or about three o'clock in the afternoon. Thus Josephus, speaking of the Passover: 'They slay their sacrifices from the ninth hour (three o'clock) to the eleventh, (five o'clock.)' Thus also the Talmud: 'They slew the daily (evening) sacrifice at the eighth hour

7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.
8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and [d] unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.

[d] ch. 34. 25. Deut. 16. 3. Numb. 9. 11. 1 Cor. 5. 8.

and a-half, (or half past two,) and offered it up at the ninth hour and a-half, (or half past three.) But on the eve of the Passover they slew it at the seventh hour and a half, (or half past one,) and offered it up at the eighth hour and a half, (or half past two.)' And Maimonides informs us that the paschal lamb was slain and offered up immediately after the usual time of killing and offering up the evening sacrifice. In like manner our blessed Lord, who is the 'true Passover slain for us,' was condemned soon after the sixth hour, John, 19. 14; i. e. after our twelve at noon, and he died soon after the ninth hour, Mat. 27. 46. 50; i. e. after our three in the afternoon.

7. *Strike it on the two side-posts.* Which was done by means of the hyssop-branch. This was to be done as a mark of safety, a token of deliverance, that the destroying angel, when passing through the land to slay the first-born of the Egyptians, might see and *pass over* the houses of the Israelites, and spare their families. They were sinners as well as the Egyptians, and God might *justly* have punished them for their sins by taking away the lives of their first-born. But he was pleased to show them mercy, and accept the life of a lamb as a substitute. Its blood was the signal of this, and all who obeyed the command of God and relied on his protection, were secure from the stroke of the avenger. Nothing could be a more significant and striking emblem of the application of Christ's blood to the guilty conscience as the sole means of deliverance from the wrath to come. In him we have redemption through his blood. His is the true 'blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' It is better than the blood of the Passover-lamb, for it effects for us a far greater deliverance than that of the Israelites; it redeems us from the bondage of Satan and sin, from the fear of death and hell.——¶ *On the upper door-post of the houses.* Heb. עַל הַמַּשְׁקוֹף *al hammashkoph;* i. e. the lintel, or that part of the door-frame which lies across the door-posts over head. The Hebrew word in its radical signification denotes *looking*, and may here imply a part of the door-frame which was peculiarly *prominent* and *conspicuous*, which would naturally *be looked at*. Others, however, suppose, with perhaps more plausibility, that the term carries the import of *looking through*, and implies that the Egyptian houses had *lattices* or *windows* over their doors, through which it was customary for the inmates to look upon hearing a knock. It was not to be sprinkled upon the threshold, perhaps out of regard to its typical import, to intimate that the blood of Christ is not to be trodden under foot, or counted by any as an unholy thing.

8. *Roast with fire.* Because it could sooner be made ready by roasting than by boiling. This circumstance constituted a marked difference between the Passover-lamb and all the other peace-offerings, the flesh of which was usually boiled, in order to be eaten both by the people and the priests, as something additional even at the paschal solemnity. Wherefore in 2 Chron. 35. 13, the two kinds of offerings are accurately distinguished: 'And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans.' Whether any more satisfactory

9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but [e] roast *with*

[e] Deut. 16. 7.

fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

moral reason can be assigned for this order, than that the extremity of our Savior's sufferings from the fire of God's wrath might be thereby affectingly depicted, we pretend not to say.——¶ *With unleavened bread.* This also was ordered for the sake of expedition, Deut. 16. 3, as both Abraham and Lot, in preparing a hasty meal for their visiters, caused unleavened cakes to be made. The original term is supposed to be derived from a word signifying to *press, squeeze,* or *compress,* and is applied to bread destitute of the fermenting matter, because it has its parts closely *compressed* together, and becomes what we commonly call *heavy.* So, on the other hand, our English word 'leaven,' is formed from the French 'levain,' which is derived from the verb 'lever,' *to raise up,* the effect produced upon dough by *leaven* rendering the bread *light* and *spongy.* The use of unleavened bread as a perpetual observance in the paschal celebration may have been designed to remind the chosen people of their leaving Egypt in such haste as to be obliged to carry their unleavened dough with them. It is also not unreasonably to be inferred from one or two passages in the New Testament, that a mystical meaning was couched under this circumstance. Leaven is a *species of corruption,* caused by fermentation, and tending to putrefaction. For this reason it is said of our Savior, Luke, 12. 1, 'He began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the *leaven* of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.' Paul also in 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8, says, 'Purge out therefore the *old leaven;* for Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old *leaven,* neither with the *leaven* of malice and wickedness; but with the *unleavened bread* of sincerity and truth.'——¶ *With bitter* herbs. Heb. מְרֹרִים *merorim, bitters,* or *bitternesses.* That is, with bitter things, bitter ingredients; alluding doubtless to herbs, such as *succory* or *wild lettuce,* as it is rendered in the Vulgate, although some commentators have imagined that not herbs, but a *bitter* or *sour sauce,* like that mentioned by the Evangelist in which Jesus dipped the sop which he gave to Judas, John, 13. 26, is meant. But this is less likely, as the Talmudists enumerate the different species of herbs allowed to be eaten with the paschal lamb, among which were the *lettuce,* the *endive,* the *horehound,* &c. In modern times, in England and some other northern countries, we are told that *horse-radish* is used. The Israelites were probably commanded to eat these bitter herbs on this occasion in remembrance of their afflictions in Egypt, where their lives had been made *bitter.*

9. *Eat not of it raw.* That is, half-roasted, or superficially done, having some of the blood remaining in it. With the express prohibition, Gen. 9. 4, against eating blood before them, they scarcely needed to be warned against eating flesh absolutely *raw.* But in the hurry with which the first passover was observed, and with so great a number of paschal lambs, it might easily happen that some of them would be but imperfectly done, unless specially admonished on that score.——¶ *Nor sodden at all with water.* Not boiled at all. *Sodden* is the past participle of *seethe, to boil.* Should it be deemed superfluous to say 'sodden, or boiled, *with water,*' there being no other way supposable in which the flesh of animals would be boiled, it may be observed in reply, that the Heb. word בָּשֵׁל *bashal* is applied both to *roasting* and *boiling,* and Moses, in order to take away the

10 [f]And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning: and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

[f] ch. 23. 18. & 34. 25.

11 ¶ And thus ye shall eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; [g]it *is* the LORD'S passover.

[g] Deut. 16. 5.

ambiguity, adds the specification 'with water;' as also in naming its opposite in the next clause, he says, 'roast *with fire*.——¶ *With the purtenance thereof.* Heb. עַל קִרְבּוֹ *al kirbo, with his midst, or inwards;* meaning that the lamb was to be roasted whole and entire. Neither the head nor the legs were to be separated, nor the intestines removed. It may be supposed however that these last simply included the *heart, lungs, liver, kidneys,* &c. and not the intestinal canal.

1. *Ye shall let nothing of it remain.* Lest it should be appropriated to a superstitious use, and also to prevent putrefaction; for it was not meet that a thing offered to God should be subjected to corruption, which in such hot countries it must speedily undergo. Thus the body of our Lord 'saw no corruption,' Ps. 16. 10, Acts, 2. 17, and it was his body which was prefigured by the paschal lamb.

11. *With your loins girded.* 'That is, as persons prepared for a journey. The inhabitants of the East usually wear long and loose dresses, which, however convenient in postures of ease and repose, would form a serious obstruction in walking or in any laborious exertion, were not some expedients resorted to, such as those which we find noticed in Scripture. Thus the Persians and Turks, when journeying on horseback tuck their skirts into a large pair of trousers, as the poorer sort also do when travelling on foot. But the usage of the Arabs, who do not generally use trousers, is more analogous to the practice described in the Bible by 'girding up the loins.' It consists in drawing up the skirts of the vest and fastening them to the girdle, so as to leave the leg and knee unembarrassed when in motion. An Arab's dress consists generally of a coarse shirt and a woollen mantle. The shirt, which is very wide and loose, is compressed about the waist by a strong girdle generally of leather, the cloak being worn loose on ordinary occasions. But in journeying or other exertion, the cloak also is usually confined by a girdle to which the skirts are drawn up and fastened. When manual exertion is required, the long hanging sleeves of the skirt are also disposed of by the ends of both being tied together and thrown over the neck, the sleeves themselves being at the same time tucked high up the arm.' *Pict. Bib.*——¶ *Shoes on your feet.* 'This was another circumstance of preparation for a journey. At the present time Orientals do not, under ordinary circumstances, eat with their shoes or sandals on their feet, nor indeed do they wear them indoors at all. This arises not only from the ceremonial politeness connected with the act of sitting unshod; but from the fear of soiling the fine carpets with which their rooms are covered. Besides, as they sit on the ground cross-legged, or on their heels, shoes or sandals on their feet would be inconvenient. To eat therefore with sandalled or shod feet is as decided a mark of preparation for a journey as could well be indicated. But perhaps a still better illustration is derived from the fact, that the ancient Egyptians, like the modern Arabs, did not ordinarily wear either shoes or sandals. In their sculptures and paintings very few figures occur with sandalled feet; and as we may presume, that in the course of 215 years

12 For I [h] will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and [i] against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: [k] I *am* the LORD.

[h] ch. 11. 4, 5. Amos 5. 17.

[i] Numb. 33. 4. [k] ch. 6. 2.

the Israelites had adopted this and other customs of the Egyptians, we may understand that (except by the priests) sandals were only used during journeys, which would render their eating the passover with sandalled feet, a still stronger mark of preparation than even the previous alternative.' *Pict. Bible.* It does not appear that the directions given in this verse were held to be binding in the subsequent observance of the paschal rite. It is clear, at least, that our Savior and his Apostles celebrated the Passover in a *sitting* or *recumbent* posture, denoting ease and security, the contrary of the urgent haste of the Israelites on this occasion.——¶ *It is the Lord's passover.* Heb. פסח *pesah*, *leap*, or *transition*. So called from the figurative destroying angel's *passing over* the blood-marked houses of the Israelites. The legitimate signification of the original is to *leap* or *skip over*. A phraseology constructed with reference to this incident occurs Amos, 7. 8, 'I will not pass by them any more;' i. e. 'I will not grant them exemption any more; intimating how often he had passed by them, as now, while his judgments were abroad. Gr. παρχα.

12. *I will pass through the land of Egypt.* That is, in the infliction of my wrath. Chal, 'I will reveal myself in the land of Egypt.' Arab. 'I will make manifest my Angel.' Thus Amos, 5. 17, 'And in all vineyards shall be wailing; for *I will pass through thee*, saith the Lord;' i. e. in desolating judgment.——¶ *Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment.* Heb. בכל אלהים *bekol Elohim*, by which may be meant not only the objects of their idolatrous worship, but also the *princes* or *grandees* of the nation. Probably the most appropriate sense of the term is the general one of *powers*, *principalities*, *dignities*, whatever in fine constituted the grand objects of their dependence, whether divine or human. Arab. 'All the objects of adoration.' These should all, by the stupendous judgments of this night, be turned to confusion together, and their votaries covered with indelible shame. What could be a more signal infliction upon the gods of Egypt than the complete exposure of their impotence to aid their worshippers in a time of need? We have elsewhere but a single allusion to this incident of the divine visitation, and that is not of a nature to afford us any help to a more minute explanation. Num. 33. 4, 'For the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the Lord had smitten among them; upon their *gods* also the Lord executed judgments.' There is a tradition among the Jewish doctors, which may be well founded, that the *idols* of the Egyptians were on that night demolished. Thus Pirke Eliezer, ch. 48, 'When Israel came out of Egypt, what did the holy blessed God do? He threw down all the images of their abominations, and they were broken in pieces.' Targ. Jon. 'Their molten images were dissolved and melted down, their images of stone were dashed in pieces, their images made of earth were crumbled into bits, and their wooden ones reduced to ashes.' Artapanus in Prep. Evang. of Eusebius, l. 9. c. 27, goes so far as to affirm, that most of the Egyptian temples were overthrown on this occasion and from the allusion in Isaiah, ch. 19. 1, to the idols of Egypt being *moved* at the Lord's presence, the idea is perhaps not ill founded. It would be a singular fact should the truth prove to be that the traces of violent wrenchings and disruptions, now so evident in the

13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are:* and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt.
14 And this day shall be unto you [l] for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a [m] feast to the LORD throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast [n] by an ordinance forever.

[l] ch. 13. 9. [m] Lev. 23. 4, 5. 2 Kings 23. 21. [n] ver. 24. 43. & ch. 13. 10.

massy ruins of the temples of Upper and Lower Egypt, should have happened at the very time of which we are now speaking.

13. *When I see the blood, I will pass over you.* Heb. פסחתי *pasahti*; the original word from which פסח *pesah, passover* is derived, and a different one from that rendered 'pass through,' in the preceding verse. Gr. σκεπασω υμας, *I will protect you.* Chal. I will commiserate, or spare you.'——¶ *To destroy you.* Heb. למשחית *lemashith, for a corruption or destruction.*——¶ *Ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord.* Heb. חגתם אתו חג *haggothem otho hag, ye shall festivally keep it a feast.*——¶ *By an ordinance for ever.* Heb. חקת עולם *hukkath olam, a statute of eternity;* one to be observed as long as the legal economy should subsist.

15. *Seven days shall ye eat,* &c. That is, seven days commencing on the day after the killing of the passover, or the fifteenth day of the month. The feast of unleavened bread was in fact a distinct ordinance from the passover, though following immediately upon it. This law respecting the feast of unleavened bread, though given *before* the departure from Egypt, seems not to have gone into effect till *after* it.——¶ *Ye shall put away.* Heb. תשביתו *tashbithu, ye shall cause to cease.* Gr. αφανιειτε, *ye shall abolish or cause to disappear.* 'This was probably to commemorate the fact that the Israelites left Egypt in such haste, that they had no opportunity to leaven their dough (v. 39), and were consequently obliged, in the first instance, to eat unleavened cakes, (Deut. 16. 3). The present injunction is even now attended to by modern Jews with the most scrupulous precision. The master of the family searches every corner of the house with a candle, lest any crumb of leavened bread should remain, and whatever is found is committed to the fire; and after all, apprehending that some may still remain, he prays to God that, if any leaven be still in the house, it may become like the dust of the ground. Extraordinary precautions are also used in preparing the unleavened bread, lest there should be any thing like leaven mixed with it, or any kind of fermentation take place in it. See Jennings' 'Jewish Antiquities.' Two distinct words are employed to signify 'leaven' in this verse, the former of which שאר *seor*, properly imports *leaving* or *remainder*, and is rendered by Ainsworth, the most exact of all translators, 'old leaven,' to which Paul alludes, 1 Cor. 5. 7, 'Purge out therefore the *old leaven*,' &c. The other חומץ *hometz*, is so called from a word signifying *sourness*. The terms, perhaps, have allusion to a two-fold species of spiritual leaven, the one hidden and secret, or hypocrisy, Luke, 12. 1, the other *open malice* and *wickedness*, Cor. 5. 8, or *wicked persons*, as David, Ps. 71. 4, calls the malicious and unrighteous man, חומץ *hometz, a leavener*, though rendered in our translation 'cruel man.' Thus also Ps. 73. 21, he terms the heart infected with error and filled with vexation, 'leavened,' although our version has 'grieved.'——¶ *That soul shall be cut off.* Shall be excommunicated from the society and privileges of the chosen people, either by the public act of the proper officers,

15 ° Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, ᵖ that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

16 And in the first day *there shall be* ᵠ an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation to you: no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.

17 And ye shall observe *the feast of* unleavened bread; for ʳ in this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

° ch. 13. 6, 7. & 23. 15. & 34. 18, 25. Lev. 23. 5, 6. Numb. 28. 17. Deut. 16. 3, 8. 1 Cor. 5. 7. ᵖ Gen. 17. 14. Numb. 9. 13. ᵠ Lev. 23. 7, 8. Numb. 28. 18, 25. ʳ ch. 13. 3.

18 ¶ ˢ In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

19 ᵗ Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, ᵘ even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.

20 Ye shall eat nothing leavened: in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

21 ¶ Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, ˣ Draw out, and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover.

ˢ Lev. 23. 5. Numb. 28. 16. ᵗ Exod. 23. 15. & 34. 18. Deut. 16. 3. 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. ᵘ Numb. 9. 13. ˣ ver. 3. Numb. 9. 4. Josh. 5. 10. 2 Kings 23. 21. Ezra 6. 20. Matt. 26. 18, 19. Mark 14. 12,—16. Luke 22. 7, &c.

or by the direct hand of God himself. See Note on Gen. 17. 14.

16. *An holy convocation.* Heb. מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ *mikra kodesh, a convocation of holiness.* By the prohibition of secular work, it appears that these days were to be regarded as proper sabbaths, with the exception that on these days meat might be dressed, which was unlawful on the Sabbath, Ex. 16. 23, 24. The original for 'convocation' comes from a verb קָרָא *kara*, signifying *to call, to make proclamation*, and implies the summoning the people together by the sound of the trumpet, as is intimated Num. 10. 2, 'Make thee two trumpets of silver—that thou mayest use them for the *calling* of the people;' the same word as that here rendered 'convocation.'——¶ *Save that which every man must eat.* Heb. כָּל נֶפֶשׁ *kol nephesh, every soul;* i. e. every person. See Note on Gen. 14. 21.

17. *In this self same day.* Heb. בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה *be etzem ha-yom hazzeh, in the strength or bone of this day.* See Note on Gen. 7. 13.——¶ *Have I brought,* &c. As the deliverance of the Israelites had not yet been actually accomplished, this phraseology is doubtless adopted on the ground of the certainty of the event in the view of the divine mind, and as the matter of his promise.

18. *Ye shall eat.* Ye shall begin to eat.

19. *Whether he be a stranger or born in the land.* As 'strangers,' strictly so called, or foreigners, were not permitted to partake of the Passover unless previously converted and circumcised, v. 43, 44, the word must here be understood of gentile proselytes in contradistinction from native-born Israelites.

21. *Draw out and take you a lamb.* Heb. מִשְׁכוּ *mishku.* Draw out from the folds. Of this word, which is frequently employed in the sense of *drafting* or *making a levy*, see a full explanation in the Note on Judg. 4. 6.——¶ *Kill the passover.* That is, the lamb

22 y And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the bason, and z strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that *is* in the bason: and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

23 a For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and b will not suffer c the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite *you*.

24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, d according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

26 e And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

y Hebr. 11. 28. z ver. 7. a ver. 12. 13. b Ezek. 9. 6. Rev. 7. 3. & 9. 4. c 2 Sam. 24. 16. 1 Cor. 10. 10. Hebr. 11. 28.

d ch. 3. 8, 17. e ch. 13. 8, 14. Deut. 32. 7. Josh. 4. 6. Ps. 78. 6.

of the Passover; the animal slain being called, by a figure of speech, by the name of the institution of which it constituted a leading feature. In accordance with this, we often meet with the phrase 'to eat the Passover,' 'to prepare the Passover,' &c.; and in like manner the word 'covenant' is used for the sacrifice offered in making the covenant; the 'rock' that followed the Israelites 'was Christ;' and the 'bread and wine' of the sacrament are the 'body and blood' of Christ.

22. *Ye shall take a branch of hyssop.* A plant growing about a foot and a half high, having bushy stalks, terminated by spikes of flowers, and leaves of an aromatic smell, and warm, pungent taste. It grows in great plenty on the mountains near Jerusalem. From its growing in bunches, and putting out many suckers from a single root, it was well adapted to the purpose here mentioned, as also for purifications of different kinds.——¶ *None of you shall go out.* This injunction seems also peculiar to this first Passover, as the reason for it did not exist afterwards. In allusion to this language the prophet says, Isa. 26. 20, 'Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.' Those who expect God's salvation must abide by the terms on which he has declared it his purpose to grant it.

23. *When he seeth the blood,* &c. No destroyer can smite unless God first grant him a commission. And the Most High always recognises his own mark upon those who bear it, and while they are 'passed over' and spared in the visitation of his wrath, all others must expect to fall under the stroke of his breath.——¶ *Will not suffer the destroyer to come in,* &c. By this is generally understood *a destroying angel.* But as the term 'angel' is often employed figuratively as a personification of divine judgments, we have no question that this is the preferable sense here. But as the subject has already been fully discussed in another place (Note on Ex. 3. 2.), it will be unnecessary to recite the arguments again in connexion with this passage.

25. *Ye shall keep this service.* That is, with the exception of those circumstances of the ordinance which in their own nature were confined to the first instance of its celebration.

26. *When your children say unto you, What mean ye by this service?* Heb. מה העבדה הזאת לכם *mah ha-abodah hazzoth lakem, what this service to you?* i. e. what does it signify? The annual observance of this ceremony was well

27 That ye shall say, [f]It *is* the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people [g]bowed the head and worshipped.

28 And the children of Israel went away, and [h]did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

29 ¶ [i]And it came to pass, that at midnight [k]the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, [l]from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that *was* in the

[f] ver. 11. [g] ch. 4. 31. [h] Hebr. 11. 28.

[i] ch. 11. 4. [k] Numb. 8. 17. & 33. 4. Ps. 78. 51. & 105. 36. & 135. 8. & 136. 10. [l] ch. 4. 23. & 11. 5.

calculated to secure the perpetual remembrance of the events which it celebrated. The various rites and usages connected with it were so peculiar, they made such an inroad upon the ordinary routine of domestic life, that the curiosity of children would be naturally arrested, and they would be led to inquire into the reasons of such strange proceedings. This would afford to parents the opportunity to acquaint their offspring with the origin and import of the solemn service, and to impart to them all those related instructions which were so important to be received into their opening minds. The inquisitiveness of children when it flows in this channel, prompting them to learn the reasons of religious services and the meaning of the various solemn ordinances which they behold, is always to be encouraged. Indeed we see not how pious parents at this day can take their children to witness the common ordinances of the Christian Church, viz. baptism and the Lord's supper, and consider their duty discharged without explaining to them the nature of those solemn rites, and endeavoring to impress upon their minds the duties and obligations which they involve.

27. *The people bowed the head and worshipped.* That is, when all these informations and instructions were communicated to them by the elders; for it seems from v. 21, that Moses' address was made to the people through the elders.

28. *And the children of Israel went away and did as the Lord commanded.* This was a very proper sequel to the professions implied in their bowing and worshipping. Unless followed by a prompt and candid obedience our acts of external reverence are a 'bodily exercise that profiteth little.'

29. *At midnight the Lord smote all the first-born,* &c. Had this judgment been executed by an angel, it would have been natural for the writer here to have said that the angel went forth at midnight and smote all the first-born of the Egyptians, both of men and cattle, But it is ascribed directly to the Most High himself, as no doubt it is to be understood. Indeed it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of such an effect wrought at one and the same time all over Egypt by the agency of a single angel. We are obliged to conceive of him in this work as passing from house to house in at least successive moments of time, and as we may suppose that there were many thousands slain, we see not how they could all have been said to perish at the hour of midnight, as they undoubtedly did. On the whole there can be no question we think that the judgment in v. 23, is personified. But how shall we adequately conceive of the complicated horrors of that fearful night? The groans of the dying, mingled with the shrieks of the living, broke in upon the stillness of the night, and from the imperial palace to the poorest hovel, lamentation and mourn-

dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle.

30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a [m] great cry in Egypt: for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

[m] ch. 11. 6. Prov. 21. 13. Amos 5. 17. Jam. 2. 13.

ing and woe were heard throughout the length and breadth of the land! Three days and three nights previously they had been wrapped in gloomy darkness, even darkness which might be felt, and no one had risen up that night from his place. But now they were aroused from their beds to render what aid they could, though all in vain, to their expiring children and brothers and sisters. The blow was universal and irresistible. There was no discharge in that warfare, and no respect of persons in the indiscriminate destruction of the appointed victims. All the first-born, from man in the vigor of manhood to the infant which had just been born, died in that hour of death. The stay, the comfort, the delight of every family was annihilated at a single stroke! And how natural was it for them in such a scene of carnage to fancy that they were all doomed to destruction, and that the work of death would not cease till they had all perished? But let us not fail to recognise the righteous retribution, as well as the awful terrors of the Almighty in this visitation. The Egyptians had killed the children of the Lord's people, and now their own children die before their eyes. Israelitish mothers had wept over the cruel deaths of their infants, and now Egyptian mothers wept for the same woe. Upwards of eighty years before had that persecution begun, but the Lord visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and now the day of his vengeance and recompense was come. The cry of these slaughtered innocents had risen up, 'How long, O Lord holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?' A book of remembrance had been written, space for repentance had been afforded, warnings had been given; but all had been unavailing, and now nought remained but that justice should do its desolating work. And similar will the issue be with those who after their impenitent hearts treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. If they turn not he will whet his glittering sword, and a great ransom will not then deliver them.

30. *Not a house where there was not one dead.* As it is somewhat difficult to suppose that in *every* house in Egypt every first-born child was still alive, the present expression is probably to be taken with some qualification. We may either suppose 'house' in this case equivalent to 'family,' or the phrase may be classed with those *absolute* modes of speech which are yet to be understood *comparatively*. We have already noticed a striking usage of this kind in what is said of 'all the cattle,' and 'all the herbs,' in ch. 10. 15. In fact the universal negative or affirmative terms 'none' and 'all' are very frequently to be understood with exceptions, especially when such exceptions are so few as scarcely to deserve notice when compared with the cases in which the proposition holds good. Thus it is said, Ps. 53. 3, 'There is none that doeth good;' i. e. scarcely any one. So Jer. 5. 1, 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth;' which has a strong negative implication, and yet we cannot doubt that there were actually pious men then living in Jerusalem, especially the prophets. On the same princi-

31 ¶ And [a] he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, *and* get you forth from among my people, [b] both ye and the children of Israel: and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.

32 [p] Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone: and [q] bless me also.

33 [r] And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, [s] We *be* all dead *men*.

[a] ch. 11. 1. Ps. 105. 38. [b] ch. 10. 9. [p] ch. 10. 26.

[q] Gen. 27. 34. [r] ch. 11. 8. Ps 105. 38 [s] Gen. 20. 3.

ple it is said 1 Sam. 25. 1, 'And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together and lamented him, and buried him;' i. e. the body of the nation; not in the most literal sense every individual. In like manner, John, 12. 19, 'The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye avail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him:' i. e. the great mass of the people. We may suppose therefore that all that is implied in the present case is, that nearly every house in Egypt had one or more slain in it.

31. *Called for Moses and Aaron.* As Moses had before this withdrawn from the presence of Pharaoh, with the determination to see his face no more, this must be understood to mean that Pharaoh sent his servants or deputies to Moses and Aaron, and thus communicated his message to them. See Note on Gen. 49. 1. This was a striking fulfilment of Moses' previous declaration, ch. 11. 8, and clearly proving that he then spake under a divine impulse; 'And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee.'

32. *Also take your flocks,* &c. Pharaoh's pride is now effectually humbled, and he surrenders at discretion. He yields unreservedly to all that Moses had insisted on, and even betrays so much of a guilty conscience as to beg an interest in his prayers; for this is evidently to be understood by the request that Moses would bless him also. He desired that Moses would bless him by invoking the blessing of God upon him. Chal. 'Pray for me also,' Arab. 'Cause me to receive indulgence.' The oppressor is here taught that the Israel of God is not only a *blessed*, but a *blessing* people, and that it is highly desirable to have the benefit of their intercessions. Yet the sequel shows clearly that even now he was not penitent. He submitted not in heart, nor sincerely humbled himself before God. He let them go by constraint and most unwillingly. He would still have held out if he had dared, and he yielded only because he could oppose no longer. He made a forced show of obedience, but his heart was as hard and rebellious as ever.

33. *And the Egyptians were urgent.* Heb. ותחזק מצרים *vattehezak Mitzraim, and Egypt was strong upon them;* the same word in the original with that which is, for the most part, applied to the *hardening* (strengthening) of Pharaoh's heart, implying a most vehement, pressing urgency. Gr. κατεβιάζοντο. Ps. 105. 38, 'Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.' Jerus. Targ. 'The Egyptians said, If Israel tarry one hour, lo, all the Egyptians are dead men.' For ought they knew, the plague they had experienced might be but the precursor of another still more dreadful, that would sweep off the whole population in a mass. 'When death comes into our houses, it is seasonable for us to think of our own mortality. Are our relations dead? It is easy to infer thence that we are dying, and in effect already dead men.' *Henry.*

34 And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.
35 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses: and they borrowed of the Egyptians [t] jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment.

[t] ch. 3. 22. & 11. 2.

34. *Their kneading-troughs being bound up*, &c. Heb. משארתם *misha-rotham*, prop. *relics*. Targ. Jon. 'What was left of the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs;' with which Jarchi concurs. The Gr. varies, rendering it *τα φυραματα, lumps of dough*, for which it is not easy to determine their authority. The Hebrew term is supposed to signify both the *dough* and the *vessel* in which it was contained; and it is probable that the dough was wrapped in some kind of covering cloth, or thrown into some kind of sack, as the word rendered 'clothes' denotes any thing which covers a substance, or wherein it is wrapped. Arab. 'Their cold mass of dough being bound up in towels, and put on their shoulders.' We learn indeed from the reports of modern travellers that the vessels which some of the oriental tribes make use of for kneading the unleavened cakes while travelling in the desert, are *small wooden bowls*, in which they both knead their bread, and afterward serve up their provisions when cooked; yet Dr. Pocock informs us that the Arabs not unfrequently carry their dough in something else, and gives a description of a *round leather coverlid*, which they lay on the ground, and from off which they eat, having a number of rings round it, by which it is drawn together with a chain, terminating in a hook to hang it by. This is drawn together, and they sometimes carry in it their *meal made into dough*; and in this manner they bring it full of bread; and when the repast is over, carry it all away at once. Which of these two kinds of vessels is meant in this place cannot easily be ascertained, but there is no question that some other term than 'kneading-troughs' ought to be adopted. The habit is very natural of identifying oriental utensils with our own when the same name is given to both, although the ideas thus acquired are often extremely incorrect.

35. *They borrowed of the Egyptians jewels*, &c. 'Dr. Boothroyd, instead of borrow, translates 'ask.' Dr. A. Clarke says, 'request, demand, require.' The Israelites wished to go three days' journey into the wilderness, that they might hold a feast unto the Lord. When the Orientals go to their sacred festivals, they always put on their *best jewels*. Not to appear before the gods in such a way, they consider would be disgraceful to themselves and displeasing to the deities. A person, whose clothes or jewels are indifferent, will *borrow* of his richer neighbors; and nothing is more common than to see poor people standing before the temples, or engaged in sacred ceremonies, well adorned with jewels. The almost pauper bride or bridegroom at a marriage may often be seen decked with gems of the most costly kind, which have been *borrowed* for the occasion. It fully accords therefore, with the idea of what is due at a sacred or social feast, to be thus adorned in their best attire. Under these circumstances, it would be perfectly easy to *borrow* of the Egyptians their jewels, as they themselves, in their festivals, would doubtless wear the same things. It is also recorded the Lord gave them 'favor in the sight of the Egyptians.' It does not appear to have been *fully* known to the Hebrews, that they were going finally to leave Egypt: they might expect to return; and it is almost certain that, if their oppressors had known they were not to return, they would not have *lent* them their jewels.' *Roberts.*

36 [u] And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians so that they lent unto them *such things as they required:* and [x] they spoiled the Egyptians.

37 ¶ And [y] the children of Israel

[u] ch. 3. 21. & 11. 3. [x] Gen. 15. 14. ch. 3. 22. Ps. 105. 37. [y] Numb. 33. 3, 5.

journeyed from [z] Rameses to Succoth, about [a] six hundred thousand on foot *that were* men, beside children.

38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, *even* very much cattle.

[z] Gen. 47. 11. [a] Gen. 12. 2. & 46. 3. ch. 38. 26. Numb. 1. 46. & 11. 21.

36. *They lent unto them.* Heb. וַיַּשְׁאִלֻם *va-yashilum, caused them to ask.* That is, their deportment toward the Israelites was such, they were so extremely anxious for their departure, and evinced such a promptitude in furthering it, that a *strong inducement* was held out to them to *ask* for the articles which they received.——¶ *Spoiled the Egyptians.* This was in fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham, Gen. 15. 14, 'They shall come out with great substance.' Israel came into Egypt few in numbers, weak, and indigent; but they go out from the land of their oppressors greatly increased, mighty, and formidable; laden with the spoils of their cruel oppressors, the well-earned reward of the labors of many years, and of much sorrow. In allusion, perhaps, to this event, God says by the prophet Ezekiel, ch. 39. 10, 'And they shall *spoil* those that *spoiled* them, and rob them that robbed them, saith the Lord God.' See Note on Ex. 3. 22.

37. *Journeyed from Rameses to Succoth.* Heb. נסעו *yisu.* The primitive meaning of נסע *nasa*, is *to pluck out, to pull up or out*, being especially applied to *pulling up* the stakes or pins by which the tents of the nomades were fastened to the earth, and which was done by the way of preparing for migration to another place. Hence the secondary meaning of *departing, journeying, proceeding*, &c. Rameses was one of those cities which the Israelites, ch. 1. 11, are said to have built for Pharaoh. It was probably in the land of Goshen, and was made on this occasion the place of general rendezvous before their departure. Professor Stuart has given very plausible reasons for believing that this place occupied the site of the ruins of Aboukeyshid, lying about half way, or forty miles from Suez. Succoth signifies *tents* or *tent-places*, and does not necessarily imply the existence of a *town* of this name in ancient times; at any rate, no remains of such an one are found at the present time in the desert, or any of the routes from the Nile to Suez. Nothing more is necessary than to suppose Succoth to be an ordinary *encamping-place* for caravans between Rameses (Aboukeyshid) and Suez, for those who took the direct route. The original word comes from a root signifying to *hide, cover, defend*, and this was the design of those temporary tenements made of the boughs of trees, in which the Israelites lodged at this station, and in memory of which they were required, as a standing ordinance, to keep the 'feast of tabernacles' once every year.——¶ *About six hundred thousand men.* Heb. גברים *geborim, strong men.* If we compute the whole number of Israelites, male and female, adult persons and children, and allow the proportion of four to one between the number of the whole nation and those who were fit to bear arms, it will give an aggregate of two millions four hundred thousand souls which went out of Egypt with Moses and Aaron. Of this immense multitude the Psalmist says, Ps. 105. 37, 'He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among all their tribes.'

38. *A mixed multitude.* Heb. ערב רב *ereb rab, a great mixture;* a multitude composed of strangers, partly

39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened: because [b] they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

40 ¶ Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt, *was* [c] four hundred and thirty years.

[b] ch. 6. 1. & 11. 1. & ver. 33. [c] Gen. 15. 13. Acts 7. 6. Gal. 3. 17.

41 And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all [d] the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

42 It *is* [e] a night to be much observed unto the LORD, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this *is* that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

[d] ch. 7. 4. & ver. 51. [e] See Deut. 16. 6.

Egyptians, and partly natives of other countries, who had been prevailed upon by the miracles wrought in behalf of the Israelites, and from other motives, to embark with them in the present enterprise of leaving Egypt. Thus Zech. 8. 23, 'In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' It can hardly be supposed, however, that the major part of them were prompted by considerations so creditable to their piety. Self-interest was, no doubt, the moving spring with the great mass. Some of them were probably Egyptians of the poorer class, who were in hopes to better their condition in some way, or had other good reasons for leaving Egypt. Others were perhaps foreign slaves belonging both to the Hebrews and Egyptians, who were glad to take the opportunity of escaping with the Israelites. Others again were a mere rude restless mob, a company of hangers-on, that followed the crowd they scarcely knew why, perhaps made up of such vagabonds, adventurers, and debtors, as could no longer stay safely in Egypt. Whoever or whatever they were, the Israelites were no better for their presence, and like thousands in all ages that turn their faces towards Zion, and run well for a time, when they came to experience a little of the hardships of the way, they quitted the people of God and returned to Egypt.

40. *Now the sojourning*, &c. The following is a more accurate version of the original; 'Now the sojourning of the children of Israel which they sojourned in Egypt was four hundred and twenty years.' The date of this event is to be reckoned probably from the time that Abraham received the promise, Gen. 15. 13, which makes just 430 years, as detailed in the Note in loc. From the time that Jacob and his sons came into Egypt to that of the deliverance, was only 215 years. The phrase, 'children of Israel,' is to be taken therefore in a somewhat larger sense than usual, as equivalent to 'Hebrews,' and of them it might properly be said, that they were sojourners in a land that was not theirs, either Canaan or Egypt, for the space of time here mentioned. Unless we consider the words as comprehending their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we cannot include in them Israel himself, who was the person that brought them into Egypt, and lived there with his family for the space of seventeen years.

41. *Even the self-same day.* Implying probably that the time corresponded *to a day* with the period predicted.

42. *A night to be much observed.* Heb. לֵיל שִׁמֻּרִים *liĕl shimmurim, a night of observations.* That is, a night to be

43 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This *is* [f] the ordinance of the passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof:

44 But every man's servant that *is* bought for money, when thou hast [g] circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.

45 [h] A foreigner, and a hired servant, shall not eat thereof.

46 In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house: [i] neither shall ye break a bone thereof.

47 [k] All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.

48 And, when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

49 [m] One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.

50 Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

51 [n] And it came to pass the selfsame day, *that* the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt [o] by their armies.

[f] Numb. 9. 14. [g] Gen. 17. 12, 13. [h] Lev. 22. 10. [i] Numb. 9. 12. John 19. 33, 36. [k] ver. 6. Numb. 9. 13.

[l] Numb. 9. 14. [m] Numb. 9. 14. & 15. 15, 16. Gal. 3. 28. [n] ver. 41. [o] ch. 6. 26.

accounted peculiarly memorable, bringing with it the recollection of an event never to be forgotten, and awakening sentiments of unfeigned gratitude to their Almighty Deliverer.

43. *The Lord said.* Rather, 'the Lord *had* said,' probably on the same occasion as that on which he instituted the Passover; at any rate, at some time previous to the departure from Egypt. ——¶ *There shall no stranger eat thereof.* That is, while he continues a stranger or alien, unproselyted and uncircumcised. By parity of reasoning it is to be supposed that all who had proved themselves *apostate* from their religion were in like manner to be interdicted.

45. *A foreigner.* Heb. תּוֹשָׁב *toshab, a dweller, an inhabitant.* This was a term applied to those pious gentiles who, without embracing the Jewish religion, renounced idolatry and took up their abode with the chosen people—a privilege which was not allowed to foreigners who still continued idolaters. Maimonides observes of such persons, that they might dwell in any part of Judea except Jerusalem, from which they were excluded on account of its preeminent sanctity.

46. *In one house shall it be eaten.* That is, each paschal lamb was to be eaten by the requisite company or number, and consequently not divided into two or more parts to be eaten in different houses, but all that ate of it were to eat together in one house. This was for the sake of fellowship, that they might rejoice together, and edify one another while eating of it. Chal. 'In one society shall ye eat it.'——¶ *Neither shall ye break a bone thereof.* There is something in this precept which doubtless has a prospective reference to Christ our Passover, of whom the Evangelist tells us, John, 19. 33—36, that his legs were providentially prevented from being broken, in order 'that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.' So the Psalmist, Ps. 34. 20. 'He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.'

49. *One law shall be to him,* &c. The enlarged and liberal spirit of the Hebrew system appears very strikingly in these regulations. Any stranger might be incorporated into the nation by con-

forming to the rites of their religion, and thereby become entitled to all the privileges of the native-born Jew. In order to this, it was proper that they should make themselves debtors to the law in its burthens, for in God's economy *privileges* and *duties* always go together. The provision was calculated at the same time to afford hope to the Gentile and to moderate the self-complacency of the Israelite.

Remarks.—A positive institution so directly from heaven, and one so closely connected by typical relations with an event of infinitely greater importance, as the Passover, may well be supposed to be fraught with a richness of moral import demanding the most serious attention.

1. The ordinance may be viewed in reference to the *discriminating* circumstances in which it was established. God was now about to make a terrible display of his righteous indignation. The destroying angel had, as it were, received his commission, and stood prepared to pass through Egypt. But a people in covenant with the Lord, and to whom his mercy was promised; who had avouched him for their God, and cried to him for deliverance, were mingled with the multitude of Egypt; and amid the terrors of the approaching desolation, how could they escape? Some mode must be devised by which the angel, as he went his midnight round of death, might know that the Lord had put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel; so that while one was smitten, the other might be left in safety. A lamb therefore was to be slain; its blood to be sprinkled upon the lintels and side-posts of their doors; and the Lord promised that when he saw the blood, he would stay the plague from destroying them. In like manner the sentence of death has gone forth against an ungodly world. But in the midst of its condemned transgressors there is a covenant people whom he has engaged to spare. How then shall the distinction be made between them and the careless, godless world, who mock at and neglect the warnings and denunciations of heaven? The Israel of God is composed of fallen, guilty creatures, who are by nature the children of wrath, even as others. In themselves considered they do not *deserve* exemption, and are placed in the pathway of the divine anger, as the dwellers in Goshen would have been, if they had remained unmarked for safety. But lo! the Paschal Lamb is slain! The Lord Christ by his one oblation of himself once offered, makes a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He lays down his life for the sheep. They are sprinkled by his blood, sealed by his spirit, and interested by faith in the blessings of his covenant. When the Lord therefore proceeds to execute judgment upon impenitent transgressors, he views them as they are in Christ Jesus, looks in mercy towards them, and saves them from eternal death. Would we avoid the doom?—let us have recourse to the remedy. The blood of the lamb did not save the Israelites by being shed, but by being sprinkled. In the same manner, it is not the blood of Christ as shed on Calvary, but as sprinkled on the soul, that saves us from the wrath to come. We must, as it were, dip the hyssop in the blood, and by faith apply it to our own hearts and consciences, or we can have no benefit from it, no interest in it.

2. We may consider the *essential qualities of the victim*, and the manner in which it was to be treated. (1.) It was to be a lamb, the most innocent and gentle of all animals—in the idea and language of all nations, but another name for gentleness, harmlessness, and simplicity. This meek and unresisting creature was to be early removed from its fond mother's side, deprived of liberty, and destined to bleed by the sacri-

ficing knife. Who can think of its plaintive bleating during the days of separation, without emotion? What Israelitish heart so insensible as not to be melted at the thought, that his own life, and the comfort of his family, were to cost the life of that inoffensive little creature whom he had shut up for the slaughter, and which, in unsuspecting confidence, licked the hand lifted to shed its blood? (2.) It was to be a lamb of the first year, and without blemish. If it bore the mark of any deformity, or even of any defect, it would have been a forbidden sacrifice, as well as a victim unfit to represent the Lamb slain for sinners from the foundation of the world. How beautiful is the harmony between the type and the antitype! 'We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' (3.) It was to be set apart four days before it was slain; not only to mark the previous designation of Christ, to be a sacrifice, but perhaps also, as has been suggested, to foreshow that he should, during the four last days of his life, be examined at different tribunals to ascertain whether there was the smallest flaw in his character, that so his bitterest enemies might all be constrained to attest his innocence, and thereby unwittingly to declare, that he was fit to be a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. (4.) When slain and prepared, the lamb was to be eaten by *all* the Israelites at the same time, and by each party in one house. The victim was slain for all, because all were partners in the same danger, and all were to be indebted to the same mode of deliverance. And it was not to be divided and carried to different houses, when two households joined in one lamb, in order to keep up the idea of *unity* in the general observance of the ceremony. The nation appears, therefore, in the paschal solemnity as a beautiful and instructive representation of the great, united, harmonious family of God, who are 'one body, one spirit, and are called in one hope of their calling;' 'who have one Lord, one faith, one baptism.'

3. We may consider the *attendant circumstances* of the institution. (1.) The passover was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The herbs were meant primarily to awaken the remembrance of the bitter bondage to which they had been subject in Egypt; but besides this they were intended to show the necessity of penitence for sin, and to shadow forth the hardships and trials which await along the chequered path of the Lord's pilgrims in their journey to the Canaan of rest. And it is as impossible spiritually to partake of Jesus Christ, the Paschal Lamb of our salvation, without abiding godly sorrow for sin, and a sacred resolve to take up our cross and bear it cheerfully in the trials of life, as it is to bring light and darkness, east and west together. Equally impossible is it to partake of the mercies of the Son of God, while the leaven of any iniquity is indulged and cherished within our hearts. Let not Demas imagine that he may embrace the world, and hold the Savior. Let not Ananias and Sapphira suppose that they may keep back any part of that which they have solemnly dedicated to God, and yet be his true friends and servants. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, as the refuge of his soul, depart from iniquity. As the scrupulous Israelites searched with lighted candles every hidden corner and dark recess of their houses for any latent particle of leaven, so let our language be, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' (2.) It was to be eaten in a standing posture with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands, ready to depart at a moment's warning. These

CHAPTER XIII.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 [a] Sanctify unto me all the first-

[a] ver. 12. 13, 15. ch. 22. 29, 30. & 34. 19. Lev. 27. 26. Numb. 3. 13. & 8. 16, 17. & 18. 15. Deut. 15. 19. Luke 2. 23.

were to them memorial circumstances, connected with the haste and suddenness of their exit. But to us they speak an emphatic language; 'Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest.' 'Here we have no abiding city, but look for one to come.' 'Now we desire a better country, even an heavenly.' 'Arise, and let us go hence.' (3.) Not a bone of the paschal lamb was to be broken. The primary moral drift of the injunction seems to be, that what has once been offered to God is not to be unnecessarily disfigured or mangled. The blood must be shed, for that was the seal of the covenant; the flesh might be eaten for it was given for the sustenance of man's life; but the bones forming no part either of food or sacrifice, were to be left in their original state till consumed by fire with the remainder of the flesh, if any remained, in the morning. At the same time we cannot doubt that there was an ulterior allusion in this commanded circumstance of the paschal rite. 'But when the soldiers came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs.' It is clear from what follows, that the Evangelist regarded the precept of the law as a prophecy of Christ; 'For these things are done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken;' as if a special Providence had watched over the crucifixion of the Savior to secure his sacred person from maiming, and thus bring about the fulfilment of the prediction.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. *And the Lord spake unto Moses.* From v. 15, it would appear that this precept was founded upon the fact of the preservation of Israel's first-born when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. To perpetuate the remembrance of that remarkable event, and in token of their gratitude for it, their first-born, in all ages, were to be consecrated to God as his peculiar portion, and if re-appropriated to themselves, it could only be done on the ground of certain redemptions prescribed in v. 13.

2. *Sanctify unto me all the first-born,* &c. Let them be *set apart, consecrated, hallowed* to me. See the import of the term more fully explained in the Note on Gen. 2. 3. God, as the universal Creator, is of course the universal Proprietor of all his creatures, and might justly lay claim to the most absolute and unreserved dedication of *all* the progeny of men and brutes to himself. But in the present case he was pleased to restrict this *more peculiar sanctification* to the first-born, as being especially his on the ground of their protection and exemption from the destroying judgment which had swept off the first-born of the Egyptians. As he had in this fact shown to them a distinguishing mercy, he was pleased to make it the occasion of a standing acknowledgment to that effect on the part of his people. As he had spared their first-born, who were the joy, the hope, and the stay of their families, so it was fitting, as an evidence of their grateful love to their heavenly benefactor, that they should recognise as paramount his title to what he had graciously spared them, and should cheerfully resign to him who is First and Best, what was dearest and most valuable to themselves. And it is by this test that we are to determine the measure of our love to God. Does he stand so high in our affections that we are willing for his sake to part with what we love best in this world? It is only by losing sight of all the claims of infinite beneficence, and becoming deaf to the dictates of every tender and gen-

born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: it *is* mine.

3 ¶ And Moses said unto the people, [b]Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the

[b] ch. 12. 42. Deut. 16. 3.

house of bondage; for [c] by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this *place:* [d] there shall no leavened bread be eaten.

4 [e] This day came ye out, in the month Abib.

[c] ch. 6. 1. [d] ch. 12. 8. [e] ch. 23. 15. & 34 18. Deut. 16. 1.

erous emotion, that we can suffer ourselves to offer to the Most High the blind, the maimed, or the halt for sacrifice, or to serve him with that which costs us nothing. In accordance with this character of *sanctity* pertaining to the first-born, the redeemed in heaven are called 'the church of the *first-born*,' and Christ himself is the '*first-born* among many brethren.' We find indeed that at a subsequent period, Num. 3. 12, the divine Lawgiver saw fit to ordain a commutation, by which one whole tribe out of the twelve came into the room of the first-born of every tribe, as an order of priests to minister to him in holy things, which was otherwise one of the rights of primogeniture; and at any time the privilege of redemption was allowed in certain terms, Num. 18. 15—17; but neither of these provisions were to operate in such a way as to weaken the force of the moral considerations connected with the ordinance.

3. *Remember this day*, &c. Heb. זכור *zakor*, which has the import not merely of *mental recollection*, but of *actual celebration*, or of some kind of public proceeding which should serve as a perpetuating memorial of a particular event. See Note on Ex. 20. 8. The reason of this was not merely the favor shown to them in such a signal deliverance, but the display it involved of the divine interposition, and obviously the more of God and of his power there is in any deliverance, the more memorable it is.——¶ *Out of the house of bondage.* Heb. מבית עבדים *mibbeth abadim*, *out of the house of servants*; i. e. from a condition of the most severe and degrading bondage; for which reason they are said elsewhere to have been brought forth 'from the furnace of iron;' Deut. 4. 20. 1 Kings, 8. 51. Jer. 11. 4.——¶ *By strength of hand*, &c. Heb. בחזק יד *behozek yad.* As God had previously announced to Moses, Ex. 3. 19, 'I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a *strong hand* (ביד חזקה *beyad hazakah*),' where the accompanying note shows that the meaning is, *except* or *unless* by a strong hand. As the original term is the same as that applied in several instances to the *hardening* of Pharaoh's heart (see Note on Ex. 4, 21.), there is a tacit antithetical allusion to that event, implying that however *hard* or *strong* the impious king made his heart, God made his hand still *stronger.* This is one of those nice shades of meaning which cannot well be conveyed in a translation. See Note on Ex. 12. 33.——¶ *There shall no leavened bread be eaten.* This mode of rendering overlooks the true syntactical structure of the sentence, which is to be read thus; 'Remember this day in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place (so) that there should no unleavened bread be eaten;' i. e. under such circumstances as gave rise to the ordinance that no unleavened bread should be eaten.

4. *In the month Abib.* That is, in the month of *green corn*, which is the true import of the word *Abib.* The Chaldee name of this month was *Nisan*, corresponding to part of our March and part of April. See Note on Ex. 9. 31. Gr.

5 ¶ And it shall be when the LORD shall [f] bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he [g] sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey; [h] that thou shalt keep this service in this month.

6 [i] Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day *shall be* a feast to the LORD.

7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days: and there shall [k] no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

8 ¶ And thou shalt [l] shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.

9 And it shall be for [m] a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes; that

[f] ch. 3. 8. [g] ch. 6. 8. [h] ch. 12. 25, 26. [i] ch. 12. 15, 16. [k] ch. 12. 19. [l] ver. 14. ch. 12. 26. [m] See ver. 16. ch. 12. 14. Numb. 15. 39. Deut. 6 8. & 11. 18. Prov. 1. 9. Isai. 49. 16. Jer. 22. 24. Matt. 23. 5.

Vulg. Chal. and Sam. 'In the month of new fruits.' Syr. 'In the month of flowers.' Arab. 'In the month when corn has ears.'

5. *When the Lord shall bring*, &c. Provision is here made for the permanent remembrance of the great event of the nation's exodus from Egypt. The present injunction prescribes the observance of the rite after their settlement in the land of promise, and we learn that they kept only one passover during their forty years sojourn in the wilderness. It was omitted probably because circumcision was omitted during that time, which was an indispensable prerequisite to the passover.

8. *Thou shalt show thy son*, &c. The most sedulous care in instructing their children in the rites and ceremonies of their religion, and in the reasons on which they were founded, is frequently enjoined upon parents throughout the Mosaic narrative. The Psalmist also speaks of it, Ps. 78. 5—8, as a positive institution among his people; 'For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.' No one can fail to infer from this the great importance of acquainting children at an early age with the leading stories of sacred writ, and familiarising their minds with the moral lessons which they are designed to teach. It is a debt which we owe to the honor of God and to the benefit of their souls, to tell them of the great things which God has in former ages, or in our own age, done for his church, or is still doing. Nor should parents consider themselves released from this duty because their children can read these narratives for themselves, or hear them recited and explained by Sunday School teachers. They are things *to be talked about* in the family circle, which is the grand nursery of God's appointment for the training of the infant mind, and where the tender heart of childhood is most easily to be reached.

9. *It shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand*, &c. It may be doubted whether this is to be understood as a mere metaphorical expression or as a literal injunction. The Jewish commentators are generally of opinion that the

the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

10 [n] Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

11 ¶ And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land

[n] ch. 12. 14, 24.

words of the precept concerning the sanctification of the first-born were to be written on shreds of linen or parchment, and worn on their wrists and foreheads. These where the 'Phylacteries,' or *scrolls of parchment*, with portions of the law written upon them, of which our Savior speaks, Mat. 23. 5, as distinguishing, when made uncommonly broad, the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees. It is not improbable, however, that the precept here is only figurative, implying that the remembrance of God's goodness should be continually cherished, that it should no more be lost sight of than is an object appended to the hand or hanging between the eyes. Thus Prov. 3. 3, 'Bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart;' i. e. have them in perpetual remembrance. That this was a proverbial mode of speech appears from the following passages among others, Hag. 2. 23, 'In that day will I make thee *as a signet;* for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord.' Cant. 8. 6, 'Set me *as a seal* upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm.' Comp. Deut. 6. 6—9, with Note.——¶ *That the Lord's law may be in thy mouth.* That is, that it may be familiar to thee; that thou mayest frequently speak of it, both in order to affect thine own heart, and to instruct others. See Note on Josh. 1. 8.

10. *From year to year.* Heb. מִיָּמִים מִיָּמִימָה *mi-yamim yamimah, from days onward to days.* An instance of the frequent usage by which *days* is employed for *years*, particularly in the language of prophecy. Chal. 'From time to time.' This throws light upon the words of Dan. 4. 25, 35, written also in Chaldaic, 'Seven *times* shall pass over thee;' i. e. seven years.

11. *And it shall be*, &c. We have here a repetition, with some additional circumstances, of the precept respecting the separation and dedication of the first-born to God, after they should have become fixed in the land of their destined inheritance. During their sojourn in the desert the strict observance of this and some other of their national laws appears to have been dispensed with.

12. *Thou shalt set apart.* Heb. תַּעֲבִרוּ *ha-abarta, thou shalt make to pass over;* i. e. from thine own power and possession; thou shalt make a transfer of it. This term, therefore, may be considered as explanatory of the term 'sanctify,' v. 2.——¶ *That openeth the matrix.* The Hebrew expression is the same with that in v. 2.——¶ *And every firstling.* Rather 'even every firstling,' as the precept, as here repeated, has respect primarily to the first-born of beasts, and not of men. The firstlings of clean beasts, such as calves, lambs, and kids, if males, were to be dedicated to God, and used in sacrifice. These were not to be redeemed. Their blood must be sprinkled on the altar, and their fat consumed upon it; while their flesh belonged to the priest, who used it as his share of the sacrifice, Num. 18. 17, 18. But the first born of unclean beasts, as the ass's colt, for instance,

[o] ver. 2. ch. 22. 29. & 34. 19. Lev. 27. 26. Numb. 8. 17. & 18. 15. Deut. 15. 19. Ezek. 44. 30.

13 And p every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the first-born of man among thy children q shalt thou redeem.

p ch. 34. 20. Numb. 18. 15, 16. q Numb. 3. 46, 47. & 18. 15, 16.

14 ¶ r And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What *is* this? that thou shalt say unto him, s By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:

r ch. 12. 26. Deut. 6. 20. Josh. 4. 6, 21. s ver. 3.

though due to God in virtue of this law of consecration, yet, as they could not be offered in sacrifice, were either to be redeemed or killed. Comp. Num. 18. 15.

13. *Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb.* Or with a kid, as the original equally signifies. This lamb or kid was to be given to the Lord through the priest, Num. 18. 8, 15, and then the owner of the ass might appropriate it to his own use, which otherwise he would not be at liberty to do. There is no doubt that the spirit of the law applied also to other animals, as the horse, the camel, &c., but the ass alone is specified, because the Israelites had scarcely any other beast of burden, and if they had, one species would serve as a representative of all others.——¶ *Thou shalt break his neck.* Heb. ערפתו *araphto.* The original is defined in the Lexicon *to break the neck,* but it seems more properly to express the act of *decollation,* or *cutting off the neck* (i. e. *the head*), in which sense it is plainly used, Deut. 21. 4, 'And the elders of that city shall *strike off the heifer's neck* (ערפר *arephu*) there in the valley.' Is. 66. 3, 'He that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he *cut off a dog's neck* (ערף *oreph*).' The reason of the law was undoubtedly this, that whatever had been once solemnly devoted to God was ever after to be considered as clothed with such a peculiar sanctity as forbade its being put to any other use.——¶ *All the first-born of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.* The law of this redemption is more specifically given Num. 18. 16, where it appears that it was fixed at five shekels. Comp. also Num. 3. 46, 47. The redemption of a child took place when it was a month old. If it died sooner, the parents were not obliged to redeem it It died as it were to God, to whom it previously belonged.

14. *It shall be when thy son asketh thee,* &c. Again the duty of instructing children in the import of these sacred rites is inculcated. It is supposed that when they saw all the firstlings thus devoted, they would ask the meaning of it, and this their parents were required to explain to them, teaching them that God's special claim to their first-born and all their firstlings, was founded in his gracious preservation of *them* from the sword of the destroying angel. This feature of the Mosaic economy was calculated to have a powerful practical effect upon the eldest sons of every family; for when they were taught that they themselves had been redeemed by their parents according to the divine appointment, they could scarcely fail to perceive that peculiar obligations rested upon them to walk worthy of that hallowed preeminence with which they were invested in God's estimation. But if this was the impression produced by this statute on the minds of Jewish children, how should Christians be affected with the consideration, that they have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, like the first-born of Israel, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot?——¶ *By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.* This

15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that [t]the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem.

16 And it shall be for [u]a token upon thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

17 ¶ And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people [x]repent when they see war, and [y]they return to Egypt:

[t] ch. 12. 29. [u] ver. 9.

[x] ch. 14. 11, 12. Numb. 14. 1,—4. [y] Deut. 17. 16.

allusion to 'the strong hand' by which the Lord brought his people out of Egypt occurs again and again, in order the more to magnify the power of God by setting it in contrast with the opposition that was made to it. To the latest generations of Israel the language here cited was to be used, and it will be observed that it is a mode of speech which teaches the children to consider whatever was done to their *fathers* as in effect done to *themselves;* they were to conceive themselves as having existed in the persons of their progenitors. Accordingly the Psalmist says, Ps. 66. 6. 'They went through the flood on foot: there did *we* rejoice in him.' Hos. 12. 4. 'He found him in Bethel, and there he spake with *us*.' In accordance with this, the Hebrew canons say, 'That throughout all generations a man is bound to show (demean) himself as if he in person came out from the bondage of Egypt, as it is written, *And he brought* us *out*, &c. And for this cause the holy blessed God hath commanded in the law, *and then shalt remember that* THOU *wast a servant*,' Deut. 15. 5.

15. *When Pharaoh would hardly let us go.* Heb. 'When Pharaoh hardened (himself) against sending us out.'

16. *It shall be for a token upon thine hand.* This is to be considered as a continuation of the instruction which parents were to give to their children, and not directly the words of Moses or of God. They were, after explaining the grounds of the institution in question, to enjoin upon them to cherish the memory of the great event with the most sacred fidelity.——¶ *Frontlets between thine eyes.* These were parchment labels containing several passages of the law, worn upon the forehead and the left arm; called from the Greek φυλακτηρια *observatories* or *preservatories*, from a root signifying to *keep, guard, preserve.* A fuller account of them is given hereafter. See Note on Deut. 6. 8. The remark made on v. 9, is applicable here also, viz. that nothing more is necessarily implied by this language, than that they were to have these things as familiar to their minds and lips *as if* they were literally appended in the form of frontlets and phylacteries to their heads or arms.

17. *And it came to pass*, &c. As Palestine was the country which formed the final destination of Israel, and as they were now on their march thither, we should naturally suppose that the shortest and easiest route would have been selected. This was a route laying along the coast of the Mediterranean, and forming to this day the usual caravan track from Egypt to Gaza. Travelling by this road they might easily have accomplished the distance in five days, had infinite wisdom no special purposes to effect by a longer delay. But the nearest way to rest is not always that which God sees to be best for his people, and the sequel shows us that in the

present instance there was ample reason for a departure from the usual route. To say nothing of the divine purposes relative to the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and the humbling and proving of the Israelites by a protracted sojourn in the wilderness, they could not enter Canaan by the direct route without encountering the Philistines, who then occupied all its southern borders. These Philistines were a powerful and warlike nation, between whom and the Israelites there seems to have been an ancient grudge existing, from a circumstance mentioned 1 Chron. 7. 21, 22, 'And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath (Philistines) that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle. And Ephraim, their father, mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.' God could indeed with infinite ease have crushed all opposition from this or any other quarter, and have carried his people triumphantly through every obstacle, as he had abundantly shown in bringing them out of Egypt. But he saw fit to make no useless display of miraculous power, or exempt his people from the necessity of using the ordinary means of avoiding danger, notwithstanding his omnipotence was pledged to their defence. He therefore uses all the precaution of a wise and provident leader, as if apprehensive that his people, however numerous, being but little accustomed to the use of arms, and just emerging from a state of enervating servitude, would be unable, at the first onset, to face an active foe, and therefore deemed it necessary to inure them gradually to warlike exercises before exposing them to the perils of battle. To avoid, therefore, the perils which were to be anticipated in this quarter, Moses is directed to take another far more circuitous and difficult route 'by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.' We say that Moses was *directed* in this, for the circumstances clearly evince that he could have been no self-appointed lawgiver, leading forth the Israelites from Egypt of his own motion, but that he all along acted under divine dictation and control. Bad as the alternative was of passing through the territories of the Philistines, yet in the eye of mere human prudence, the other was scarcely more feasible. Moses had long fed the flocks of Jethro in that very desert, and he must have been well aware that it afforded no resources for the subsistence of such a vast host of men, women, and children, and cattle, as he was now leading thither. Had he not then been acting under a divine commission, we can see that he had merely a choice of difficulties both apparently insurmountable; on the one hand, war, without any reasonable prospect of success; on the other, starvation in the desert. With this alternative before him, would not any worldly politician have preferred fighting to starving? At any rate, how can it be imagined that if Moses possessed one half the talent which his enemies concede to him, he could have entertained such a project as that of conducting the Israelites out of Egypt, without previously well considering whither he would lead them? Nothing affords a solution of the course which he took on this occasion but the fact that he was supernaturally directed in every movement, and with this key to his conduct all his plain. It was God's will that the Red Sea route should be taken, because he foresaw that if the other were taken, the Israelites instead of standing the shock of war would have retreated ignominiously before the enemy, and have sought refuge in that very bondage from which they had so recently escaped, and by which they had become so unfitted for warlike encounters. The hard bondage in mortar and brick, and in all manner of rigorous and degrading service in the field, was not the school

18 But God [z] led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

[z] ch. 14. 2. Numb. 33. 6, &c.

in which the lessons of ardent courage and overcoming enterprise were to be learned. Slavery necessarily and fearfully debases the mind, and makes it incapable of great or noble exertion. The iron of such a state had entered deeply into the souls, no less than it painfully galled the limbs, of the Israelites. That the result *would have been* precisely what is here intimated, no one can doubt who considers what the fact actually *was* when their spirit came to be put to the test at the subsequent periods of their history. The report of the faithless spies threw them into a panic of fear, and prompted them to cry out, 'Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God that we had died in this wilderness.' Thus too when the armies of Pharaoh pursued them and the Red Sea lay before them, they exclaimed in an agony of alarm, 'Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians.' So also on experiencing the first pressure of want, they cried, 'Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full.' These then were not combatants who could be depended upon to open for themselves a way through the armies of the Philistines, and God who knew the frame of their spirits much better than they did themselves, graciously spared them a conflict to which he saw they were unequal. In like manner the infinitely wise and gracious God consults the weakness of his people in the earlier stages of their Christian course, and spares them the trials and contests which would be too much for them. His mercy tempers their burdens to their strength, and *gradually* accustoms his soldiers and servants to the difficulties of their warfare. They are first trained to contend with weaker enemies before they are called to encounter stronger ones, and by having their graces *exercised* rather than *oppressed*, they are enabled to go on from strength to strength, till they are finally qualified to wield the whole armor of God. In the mean time he who will not over-drive the tender lambs lest they should die of fatigue, expressly assures us that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, and that as our day is so shall our strength be also.

18. *The Red Sea.* As this is one of the most remarkable waters mentioned in the geography of the Scriptures, it may be proper here to give a more particular description of its general features. This we do in the words of the Editor of the *Pict. Bible.* 'It occupies a basin, in general deep and rocky, and extends about 1160 miles in length, from north to south, with a mean breadth which may be stated at 120 miles. Throughout this great extent it does not receive the waters of a single river. The western coast is of a bolder character, and has a greater depth of water than the eastern. The gulf abounds in sunken rocks, sand-banks, and small islands, together with numerous coral-reefs, which in some places rise above the water to the height of ten fathoms. The bottom is covered abundantly with the same substance, as well as with marine plants, which in calm weather give that appearance of submarine forests and verdant meadows to which the sea probably owes its Hebrew name of Yam Suph (see Note on chap. 2. 3.), as well as its present Arab name of Bahr Souf. Burckhardt observes, that the coral is red in the inlet of Akaba, and white in that of Suez. The remarkably beautiful appearance which this sea exhibits

has attracted notice in all ages; and among its other characteristics, the far more than ordinary phosphorescence of its waters has been mentioned with peculiar admiration. The width of the gulf contracts towards its extremities, and at its mouth is considerably narrower than in any other part. The strait of Bab-el-Mandeb is there formed, and does not exceed fourteen miles in breadth; beside which it is divided, at the distance of three miles from the Arabian shore, by the island of Perim. The high land of Africa and the peak of Azab give a remarkably bold appearance to the shore in this part. At its northern extremity the Red Sea separates into two minor gulfs or inlets, which inclose between them the peninsula of Sinai. The easternmost of these is that of Akaba or Ailah, called by the Greeks and Romans Ælanites; this is only about half the extent of the other, and is rendered very dangerous by shoals and coral-reefs. The westernmost gulf is called the gulf of Suez, anciently, Heeropolites: the ancient and modern names of both inlets being from towns that formerly did, or do now, stand at their extremities. It is the latter, the western gulf, which was crossed by the Hebrews. It is about 160 miles in length, with a mean breadth of about thirty miles, narrowing very much at its northern extremity. The mean depth of its water is from nine to fourteen fathoms, with a sandy bottom; and it is of much safer navigation than the other. There are many indications which place it beyond a doubt that the Arabian Gulf was formerly much more extensive and deeper than at present. One of the most certain proofs of this is, that cities, which were formerly mentioned as sea-ports, are now considerably inland. This is particularly the case in the Gulf of Suez, where the shore is unusually low. That the sea formerly extended more northward than at present, there is much reason to conclude, not only from the marine appearances of the now dry soil, but from this fact, among others, that Kolsoum, which was formerly a port, is now three-quarters of a mile inland. There is certainly nothing in the appearance of the soil about the isthmus of Suez to discountenance the hypothesis that the Red Sea was formerly no other than a strait uniting the Mediterranean with the Indian Ocean; and that the isthmus which is now interposed between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean was formed by drifts of sand from the adjoining deserts. This, however, is an hypothesis: but there is nothing hypothetical in the statement that the gulf once extended more to the north than at present; and this fact is of importance, because it enables us to see that nothing less than a miraculous interposition of the Divine Power could have enabled the Israelites to cross the bay even at the highest of the points which has been selected by those who perhaps were influenced by the wish to diminish the force of the miracle, or to account for it on natural principles.'——

¶ *Went up harnessed.* Heb. חֲמֻשִׁים *hamushim.* Marg. 'By five in a rank.' But this cannot well be considered the true rendering, for at this rate if we allow the ranks to be but three feet asunder, the 600,000 fighting men alone would have formed a procession sixty miles in length; and if we add to them the remainder of the host, the line would have extended, by the direct route, from Egypt quite into the limits of the land of Canaan. The Greek renders it, 'in the fifth generation;' but plainly erroneously, as the promise to Abraham, Gen. 15. 16, was, that they should come out in the *fourth* generation. Other versions render it diversely by 'marching in array'—'in military order'—'armed'—'well panoplied'—'girded'—'marshaled by fives'—'by fifties,' &c. It is certain that the original Hebrew term involves the sense of 'five,' but upon what circumstance the allusion is founded it

19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, [a]God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

20 ¶ And [b]they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

21 And [c]the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud,

[a] Gen. 50. 25. Josh. 24. 32. Acts 7. 16.
[b] Numb. 33. 6.
[c] ch. 14. 19, 24. & 40. 38. Numb. 9. 15. & 10. 34. & 14. 14. Deut. 1. 33. Neh. 9. 12, 19. Ps. 78. 14. & 99. 7. & 105. 39. Isai. 4. 5. 1 Cor. 10. 1.

is extremely difficult to determine. Perhaps the most probable supposition is that it includes both the import of their being in some way arranged into *five* grand divisions or squadrons, and of their being well appointed and equipped for expedite travelling, going forth not in a confused and tumultuary manner like timorous fugitives, but every one duly trussed and girded up so as to cause no impediment to others, and the whole body moving on in the style of an orderly and well marshalled army. When viewed in this aspect the spectacle must have been most imposing, and we can see with what peculiar propriety it is said, that Israel went out *with a high hand*.

19. *Moses took the bones of Joseph with him.* Joseph had expressly ordered, Gen. 50. 25, 26, that his bones should be carried up from Egypt when God should visit them, and their doing it now was not only a performance of the oath sworn by their fathers to Joseph, but an acknowledgment of God's faithful accomplishment of his promises. From the speech of Stephen, Acts, 7. 16, it is to be inferred that the bones of all the rest of the patriarchs were also at this time conveyed out of Egypt; each tribe, doubtless, taking charge of the bones of its own patriarch.

20. *Encamped in Etham in the edge of the wilderness.* We are not perhaps to suppose either in this or many other cases, that the places which are named are the *only* places at which they rested. In the present instance, if Succoth were about half way between Rameses and Suez, the second stage of their journey must have been at least forty miles, which is certainly too much to be accomplished in one day by such an immense cavalcade as that of the Israelites. Twenty miles a day for them would be severe driving. As the country was a desert, travelling would be hard; hours of refreshment and repose were needed; the beasts must have had time to collect their food from the grass and shrubs of the desert; and many of them being heavily burdened, they could move only, when they did move, with great slowness. With these considerations before us, we may perhaps safely infer that Etham was the third rather than the second encampment. The halting places of caravans are, in these desert regions, so much determined by the presence of wells, that in connexion with the circumstance of its being situated on the 'edge of the wilderness,' there is not much difficulty in concluding that Etham is the same place as the modern Adjeroud, which forms the third stage of the pilgrim's caravan to Mecca, and where there is an old fortress, a small village, and a copious well of indifferent water. This place is about eleven miles to the north-west of Suez, and is, in fact, near to the 'edge' of the wilderness, which extends around the north-eastern and eastern side of the Gulf of Suez. The journey to this point had been almost entirely over a desert, the surface of which is composed of hard gravel, often strewed with pebbles.

21. *The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud,* &c. Heb. בעמוד ענן *be-ammud anan.* The orig-

to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light: to go by day and night.

22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, *from* before the people.

inal comes from the root עמד *amad*, *to stand*, and imports, undoubtedly, an upright standing mass of cloud, resembling a column or pillar in a building, it being the same term as that employed in reference to the two supporting pillars of the edifice overthrown by Samson. Still it may be doubted whether this resemblance was very exact, for as it appears from Ps. 105. 39, that it was spread out at the base so as to cover as with a canopy the whole host of Israel, shading them from the intense heat of the sun, the height of the pillar, if it bore any proportion to such a base, must have been immense, as an encampment for 2,400,000 men would require a space of ground of nearly twelve miles square. We imagine, therefore, that in external appearance it approached near to the form of an ascending column of smoke, with a widely extended base, and shooting up to an inconceivable height in the heavens. Some have supposed that the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire were two distinct pillars, but the hypothesis is scarcely necessary; one might have answered both purposes. This pillar-cloud was a striking emblem of the divine *protection* and *guidance* to the chosen people in their sojournings, and we find very significant allusions to it in the following passages, Is. 4. 5, 6, 'For the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory there shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and a place of refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain.' This predicts the same favored period of the church with that described by the inspired writer, Rev. 7. 15, 16, 'And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat;' i. e. they shall have the symbols of the divine presence with them as the Israelites had in the wilderness, only in a far more glorious manner; and while they shall be shadowed, as were the chosen people, from the burning rays of the sun, they shall be exempted from their privations; they shall not complain of hunger or thirst. It is evident that this cloudy pillar was the seat or habitation of the divine presence, and therefore, in one sense, his throne, from which oracles were given forth to the people. See Deut. 31. 15.

Remarks on the Pillar of Cloud.

Under the strong conviction that this extraordinary phenomenon has not hitherto been duly appreciated *as a visible symbol of the Divine Presence*, we are induced to add some remarks upon the purposes which, in that character, it was designed to answer. Of its uses as a guiding signal to the chosen tribes in their march through the wilderness, we have, both here and elsewhere, the clearest intimations. Thus, Ps. 78. 14, 'In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.' So also Neh. 9. 12, 'Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.' In what particular manner this twofold office of a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, could be performed by one and the same aerial column, is not entirely obvious. Whether the whole mass of cloud which

was opaque by day became luminous by night; or whether there was a rending at night of the outer dark body of the cloud and the consequent disclosure of an interior splendor, which was enveloped and concealed from view during the day, has never been satisfactorily determined. We are inclined on the whole to adopt the latter opinion, not only because it strikes us as affording a more easy and consistent interpretation of the letter of various passages in which it is spoken of, but also because it harmonises better with what we conceive to have been the *substance* of this sublime symbolical *shadow;* on both which points we shall be more full in our subsequent annotations. This inwrapped inner splendor, which appeared at night, we suppose to have been that which is more appropriately termed 'the Glory of the Lord,' and this 'Glory' is said occasionally to have appeared in the day time, particularly when God would convey to his people an expression of his displeasure on account of their transgressions, or when he would strike them with a trembling awe of his majesty, as at the giving of the Law from Sinai, where the Glory of the Lord appeared as a devouring fire on the summit of the mount. Comp. Ex. 16. 10. Num. 16. 42. In like manner it appears that when the two sons of Aaron, Nabab and Abihu, offended by strange fire in their offerings, a fatal flash from the cloudy pillar instantaneously extinguished their lives. We cannot doubt, therefore, that this majestic pillar of cloud was intended to serve as the Shekinah, or visible representative of Jehovah, dwelling in the midst of the chosen people.

This, if we mistake not, will be placed still farther beyond the reach of question, upon considering the names by which it is designated. In the passage before us, ch. 13. 21, instead of the phraseology of the text, 'the Lord went before them,' the Targ. Jon. has, 'The Glory of the Shekinah went before them.' The Arab. 'The Angel of the Lord went before them.' This latter mode of rendering is to be especially noticed, as we shall find it confirmed by the sacred writer himself, Ex. 14. 19, 'And the *angel of God* which went before the camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them; and the *pillar of cloud* went from before their face and stood behind them.' Here it is evident that that which in one clause of the verse is called the 'pillar of the cloud,' is in another called the 'angel of God.' The grounds of this phraseology we have already explained in the Note on Ex. 3. 2, from which it appears that the term 'Angel' is employed to denote any kind of agency, personal or impersonal, by which the divine will or working is made manifest. Accordingly, as the visible phenomenon of the burning bush is called the 'angel of the Lord,' which was on that occasion but another name for the Shekinah, so we find the Shekinah again under another aspect, viz. that of the cloudy pillar, expressly called by the same designation, Ex. 23. 20—23, 'Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.' This Angel, we cannot question, was the visible Shekinah in the pillar of cloud; and it is to the same manifested personage that allusion is had in what is said, Is. 63. 8, 9, of the 'Angel of the divine presence,' who was afflicted in all the affliction of his people, and who in his love and in

his pity redeemed them, bearing and carrying them all the days of old. Again, the allusion is the same, Mal. 3. 1, 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the *messenger* (i. e. the Angel) *of the covenant*, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.' Here it is clear that the 'Lord' and the 'Angel of the covenant' are identical, and no one doubts that this is a prediction of the coming of Christ heralded by John the Baptist. Consequently, Christ of the New Testament, and the 'Angel' or 'Jehovah' of the Old, are one and the same. But to return to the passage last quoted from Exodus, as the 'name' of God is but another term for his *nature*, the import is, that the divine nature, that is, the divine power, efficacy, authority, majesty, and omniscience would be associated with the external visible symbol. To all practical purposes, therefore, this cloudy pillar was to them the 'Angel-Jehovah,' the God of their nation, and they were to look up to that sublime and awful column as a visible embodiment of their covenant God, as an ever present witness, and feel as if a thousand eyes were peering out of the midst of it upon them, from which not even their slightest word or deed could be hidden. Indeed this view of the cloudy pillar as a kind of watch-tower of the Almighty, an aerial Mizpeh, or 'place of espial,' is expressly recognised in the remarkable passage, Ex. 14. 24, 25, 'And it came to pass, that in the morning-watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot-wheels, that they drave them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.' We shall hereafter have occasion to notice, throughout the whole tenor of the Mosaic narrative, that this wondrous symbol is the very object which is to be understood, in innumerable instances, by the title 'Lord' (Jehovah), to which 'Angel of the Lord,' or rather 'Angel-Jehovah' is perfectly tantamount. This is plainly the idea conveyed by the language of the text which has given rise to these remarks; 'The Lord went before them in a pillar of cloud,' &c., where we do not perceive that to the minds of the ancient readers of the Hebrew Scriptures the term 'Lord' would convey any other idea than that of the visible phenomenon by, in, and through which the divine attributes were manifested. So again Deut. 1. 32, 33, 'Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.' It was this *visible Deity* which was intended in all such phrases as 'before the Lord,' 'from the Lord,' 'unto the Lord,' &c., where the circumstances compel us to affix somewhat of a *local* idea to the expression.

But another important view of the subject is afforded by the fact, that it was this visible symbol of Jehovah which was the *oracle* of the chosen people. It was the Shekinah, the Glory, enthroned in the pillar of cloud, but afterwards removed into the most holy place of the tabernacle and temple, which issued commands and delivered responses to the congregation. Thus Ps. 99. 6, 7, 'They called upon the Lord, and he answered them. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar.' A still more remarkable passage to the same effect occurs Ex. 33. 9—11, which we give with the omission of the Italics gratuitously introduced into the English version; 'And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the

tabernacle, and talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle-door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent-door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.' Here it is evident that 'cloudy pillar' and 'Lord' are used synonymously, and if the fact of such a usage in repeated instances be borne in mind, there will be no serious objection to the present mode of rendering v. 9, 'the Lord talked with Moses,' instead of simply 'it talked with Moses.' The phraseology, at any rate, is remarkable, and shows beyond question that the cloud of the Shekinah was the grand organ of communication to the covenant people. It was the *Speaker*, the *Word*, of the ancient economy; and the place whence the oracles were uttered from the Shekinah, after it became enthroned in the sanctuary, was called דביר *debir*, *word-place*, from דבר *dabar*, *word*, to which, as every scholar knows, corresponds the Gr. Λογος, *word*, used by John in the commencement of his Gospel. Indeed, we are persuaded that it is only in the view above given of the import of the visible symbol of the cloudy pillar and the enshrined Glory, that we have the true clue to the Evangelist's meaning, which, if we understand it, is nothing less than an identification of Christ with the 'Jehovah,' or the *oracular presence*, the Shekinah, of the Old Testament. 'In the beginning,' i. e. under the old dispensation, 'was the Word,' the speaking, commanding, law-giving Shekinah; 'and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,' equivalent to what Moses says, 'My name is in him,' all divine attributes were to be considered as associated with and dwelling in the sensuous symbol; 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,' the shadowy, but glorious symbol of the earlier economy at length became substantiated in human flesh, and as the incarnate Jehovah dwelt, or as the original has it (εσκηνωσεν) *tabernacled*, *shekinized* among us; 'and we beheld his glory,' referring not to the intrinsic moral glory that distinguished his character, and that might be said to be seen whenever his person was seen, but rather to that special and overwhelming display of which John, Peter, and James were eye-witnesses on the mount of transfiguration, when there was a temporary rending or laying aside of the veil of his flesh, the cloud of his human nature, and a transient disclosure of the indwelling Shekinah, the glory of his Godhead. This was a preintimation to the senses of that ineffable light and splendor in which he will appear when he comes with the retinue of his saints to be the luminary of the New Jerusalem, which is to come down from God out of heaven. The whole scene seems to have been intended to afford a demonstration to the senses of the substantial identity of the person of the incarnate Redeemer with the manifested Jehovah of the Jewish dispensation. Consequently, whatever of essential divinity is indicated by the title 'Jehovah,' it is unquestionably to be considered as belonging to Christ. The proposal of Peter on this occasion to build three tabernacles, while it showed that the overpowering display had somewhat confused his mind, shows at the same time, by a natural association, the connexion in his thoughts of the *Shekinah* with a *tabernacle*. Here was the Shekinah, which he well knew had been used to abide in a tabernacle, but there was no tabernacle to receive it, and thence his proposition.

It would be easy to prosecute this train of thought to a much greater extent, and accumulate proofs of our main position, but we must leave it to be followed out by ourselves or others under circumstances that will allow of more enlargement. We doubt not it is a field in which a rich harvest of Scripture elucidation is yet to be reaped.

CHAPTER XIV.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, [a] that they turn and encamp before [b] Pi-hahiroth, between [c] Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.

[a] ch. 13. 18.

[b] Numb. 33. 7. [c] Jer. 44. 1.

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The children of Israel had now arrived near the head of the Red Sea, and at the limit of the three days' journey into the wilderness, for which they had applied. It is therefore evident that their next move must decide their future course, and convey to the Egyptians, who doubtless kept a keen eye upon their movements, a clear and decisive intimation of their intentions. If they designed to do as they had all along declared to be their purpose, they would stay at this place and proceed to celebrate their intended feast to Jehovah; but if they meant to escape altogether, they would resume their journey, and, passing by the head of the Red Sea, strike off into the desert. The march from Etham then, whatever direction it took, was to be a decisive move, and what that move was we are now to consider.

2. *Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn*, &c. Heb. ישבו *yashubu*, from שוב, the usual meaning of which is *to return, turn back, go back again*, and so it is here rendered by Gesenius. But the circumstances of the case forbid this meaning except in a very limited degree. The import of the term undoubtedly is that of *turning off, deviating*, from the direct course, which would have been due east till they had rounded the upper extremity of the gulf. An ample confirmation of this sense of the term may be seen upon comparing Ezek. 35. 7. Zech. 7. 14—9. 8. Ps. 73. 10. The divine command now given to change the direction of their route must have been unexpected and surprising to all parties, and one which on any human principle of action would have appeared utterly inexplicable. To be convinced of this we need only bring before us the topography of the region. About the head of the Gulf of Suez a desert plain extends for ten or twelve miles to the west and north of the city of that name. On the west this plain is bounded by the mountainous chain of Attaka, which comes down toward the sea in a north-western direction, contracting the breadth of the plain more and more, till it finally seems to shut it up by its termination at Ras-el-Attaka, twelve miles below Suez. But on approaching this point ample room is found to pass beyond; and on passing beyond, we find ourselves in a broad alluvial plain, forming the mouth of the valley of Bedea. This plain is on the other or southern side nearly shut up by the termination of another chain of these mountains, which extend between the Nile and the western shore of the Red Sea. Any further progress in this direction would be impossible to a large army, especially one encumbered with flocks and herds, with women, children, and baggage. The valley of Bedea, which opens to the Red Sea in the broad plain abovementioned, narrows as it proceeds westward towards the Nile. It forms a fine roadway between the Nile and the Red Sea, and as such has in all ages been one of the most frequented routes in all the country, being travelled by all parties and caravans desirous of proceeding from the neighborhood of Cairo, or places to the south of Cairo, to Suez, or the region lying beyond the head of the gulf. Now, the Hebrew host being at Etham, and their next step from thence being of the utmost importance, they were directed, not—as might obviously

have been expected—to pass round the head of the Gulf into the Sinai peninsula, but to proceed southward, between the mountains of Attaka and the *western* shore of the Gulf, and, after passing the Ras-el-Attaka, to encamp in the plain into which the valley of Bedea opens. But the question recurs, why bring them down this way, and make the passage of the Red Sea necessary, when they might so much more easily have got into the peninsula of Sinai by going round the Gulf?—why lead them out of their way to 'entangle' and 'shut them in' between the mountains and the sea? The answer to this is given in v. 3, 4. It was to give Pharaoh an additional inducement to follow them to his own destruction, by his knowledge of the advantage which their embarrassed position would give him over them. The overthrow of the Egyptian host was the contemplated result of this movement; and by this overthrow not only did the Egyptians receive their complete and final punishment, but the immediate security and future success of the Israelites were greatly assisted by it. For we learn from many passages of Scripture, that the neighboring tribes and natives were too much alarmed and intimidated by this stupendous event to think of any hostile encounter, the single instance of the Amalekites excepted. But of this more in the sequel.——¶ *Before Pihahiroth.* Heb. לִפְנֵי פִּי הַחִירֹת *liphnĕ pi hahiroth*, more properly written in English in the form of 'Pi-hahiroth.' 'There is not a more minute specification of locality in the Bible than that which the text affords; and one is led to think that it was thus carefully pointed out, in order to render it manifest that the passage could not there be effected by less than a miracle; or, in other words, to preclude those attempts to account for it on natural grounds which have actually resulted from the memory of the spot thus distinctly denoted being now lost. Not one of the names now exists. It perhaps throws some light on the passage to read the word Pi-ha-hiroth not as a proper name, but as a descriptive epithet. *Hiroth* means a valley, a confined pass, or a defile among mountains; *pi* signifies 'mouth,' or 'entrance;' *ha* is merely the definite article *the*, or of the: so that we may read the word *Pi-ha-hiroth*, as 'the entrance of the valley or pass.' It would thus denote, as we may take it, the pass or strip of land along the western shore of the gulf, between the mountains which skirt the sea, and the sea itself. It is certain that they crossed from the western to the eastern shore; and as this valley between the mountains and the sea commences nearly at the extremity of the gulf, the Hebrews must have encamped along its 'mouth' or entrance, if the sea were nearly then as it is now; and there they would have been effectually 'shut in' between the mountains, the desert, and the sea. The same result arises if we read Pi-hahiroth as a proper name, and apply it to the mountains which confine the valley at its entrance, the present name of which, *Addagi*, 'deliverance,' may be supposed to commemorate the passage of the Red Sea, and therefore to have superseded some previous name. This opinion is the more probable, because the flanks of the Hebrew host would have been exposed to the Egyptians whilst marching into the sea, if we place the point of passage any where above this valley, in which the mountains protected the right flank, and the sea the left. Here their rear only would be exposed, and accordingly we read only of their rear being protected by the pillar of cloud, which implies that their flanks needed no protection. We also think that it has not been sufficiently considered that an encampment consisting of about two millions of people must have covered a vast extent of ground; and wherever they encamped so as to face the sea, their camp must

3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, [d] They *are* entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

[d] Ps. 71. 11.

have stretched along the shore for the extent of several miles, particularly if they were hemmed in between the sea and the mountains as we would conjecture; and if then when thus stretched out in one extensive line from north to south along the western shore of the gulf, the southern part of the body commenced the move into the dried passage in the sea, it necessarily follows that the point of passage must have been many miles below the termination of the inlet. This argument is conclusive to our minds that, consistently with their encampment along the sea coast, they must have passed many miles to the south of the end of the gulf, wherever the gulf then ended; and even if it terminated much more to the south than at present, we are still disposed to consider this position of the camp as the most probable, because most consistent with the 'shutting in,' the 'entangling,' and the other circumstances, which imply that, when the Egyptian host took them in the rear, their only way to escape was through the sea.' *Pict. Bible.*

——¶ *Between Migdol and the sea over against Baal-zepher.* It is impossible to attain to any certain [in the location of these places, nor in fact is it clear what precise idea is to be affixed to the term 'before' in this connexion. We may doubtless be satisfied that the several places mentioned were all within the distance of ten or twelve miles of each other, and probably all in sight to some part of the host, which in a valley of no great width must have spread over at least that extent. Professor Stuart (Course of Heb. Study, Exc. IV.) thinks that Migdol is identical with the modern Ber Suez, or well of Suez. 'This is a small place, strongly fortified in modern times, in order to secure the privilege of water for Suez. It is about three miles west from Suez; and in this low sandy plain, it must be altogether in view. If now in ancient times there was a similar castle or fortification at this well, (a thing altogether probable, considering the nearness of predatory Arabian Nomades), then *Migdol* was an appropriate name for the place. For although the regular Hebrew word for *tower* is מגדל *migdal*, yet מגדל *migdol*, from its derivation, seems to be altogether an equivalent for מגדל *migdal;* and therefore to mean *tower, fortified place.*'

3. *Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel.* Heb. אמר לבני ישראל *amar libnë Yisraël, will say to the children of Israel;* i. e. as to, respecting, the children of Israel. See this sense of the particle 'to' illustrated in the Note on Gen. 20. 2. Gr. *περι των υιων.*——¶ *They are entangled.* Heb. נבכים *nebukim*, from בוך *buk, to be perplexed, to wander about in perplexity*, whether physically or mentally. Gr. *πλανωνται, they rove about.* The term occurs Est. 3. 15, 'The city of Shushan was *perplexed;*' and also Joel. 1. 18, 'The herds of cattle are *perplexed*, because they have no pasture.' This sudden turn on the part of the Israelites would naturally lead Pharaoh to conclude that they had mistaken their way, and knew not what to do. But their *apparent* infatuation was the means of producing in him a *real* infatuation, which prompted him to pursue them to his ruin.——¶ *The wilderness hath shut them in.* The host of Israel having entered this narrow pass between the mountains on one side, and the sea on the other, Pharaoh would suppose that by cutting off their retreat in the rear, they would have no means of escape except through the sea, and

4 And [e] I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I [f] will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; [g] that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so.

[e] ch. 4. 21. & 7. 3. [f] ch. 9. 16. ver. 17, 18. Rom. 9. 17, 22, 23. [g] ch. 7, 5.

5 ¶ And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and [h] the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?

[h] Ps. 105. 25.

this of course did not enter his thoughts. 'What seems to tend to the church's ruin, is often overruled to the ruin of the church's enemies.' *Henry.*

4. *I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host.* Heb. אכבדה *ikkabedah, I will be glorified.* The ultimate scope to which all the counsels of Pharaoh were to be overruled is here stated; viz. the bringing of a larger measure of glory to the great name of God. This is in fact the end of all his judgments upon wicked men. As all creatures are made for his honor and glory, if they do not willingly and cordially render him his due, he will extort it from them in the righteous doom to which he condemns them. Comp. Ezek. 38. 22, 23.——¶ *And they did so.* That is, the Israelites did as they had been commanded relative to changing their route.

5. *It was told the king that the people had fled.* Pharaoh could not be ignorant that the Israelites had left Egypt, for the avowed purpose of holding a sacrifice in the desert, as they had gone out with his permission, and their departure had been hastened by his own people. But this he seems not to have regarded as a 'flight.' He is now, however, informed that they had 'fled;' i. e. that they discovered a very different intention from that of going three days' journey into the wilderness and returning again, as he had been led to expect. He now understood that they had no intention of returning. It was in this sense that Pharaoh learned that they had 'fled.' He probably received his information from some of the mixt multitude who returned upon the route being changed, for which they could see no reason, and therefore concluded it not safe to trust themselves longer to such an uncertain guidance.——¶ *And the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned,* &c. This inexorable monarch was left in a previous chapter stricken with terror and dismay at the death of the first-born. We saw him overpowered by that signal display of divine wrath against him, and inwardly constrained to send away the Israelites in haste out of his dominions. We could fain have hoped that the terrible chastisement he had already experienced would have been sufficient to humble the pride of his spirit, and bring him in penitence and prayer to the footstool of divine mercy. But, alas! the power of a reprobate sense shows itself as strong as ever. Every conviction and alarm had passed away from his obdurate mind, like breath from the polished surface of a mirror. He repented indeed, but only that he had let them go. He repented that he had been obedient to the command of God, and he would retract his permission. Pride, resentment, avarice, reassumed their empire over his heart, and goaded him on to the mad attempt to recover his escaping captives. His subjects, so far as they had a profitable interest in the labors of the Israelites, would naturally share in the feelings of the king, and the intimation of loss would not fail to alarm those who had 'lent' to the Hebrews their 'jewels of silver and jewels

6 And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him:

7 And he took [i] six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

8 And the LORD [k] hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and [l] the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

9 But the [m] Egyptians pursued after them (all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army) and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

[i] ch. 15. 4. [k] ver. 4.

[l] ch. 6. 1. & 13. 9. Numb. 33. 3. [m] ch. 15. 9. Josh. 24. 6.

of gold,' and who by this time had found leisure to think that they had too easily parted with their wealth. Thus it is that the wicked show themselves as prone to repent of their well-doing as the righteous of their ill-doing.

6. *He made ready his chariot.* Heb. וַיֶּאְסֹר אֶת רִכְבּוֹ *va-yesor eth rikbo, joined or bound his chariot;* i. e. the horses to the chariot. Gr. ἐζευξε *yoked.* The word 'chariot,' though in the singular, is to be understood in a plural sense. He ordered all his chariots to be got ready. The same term in the next verse is also singular.

EGYPTIAN WAR CHARIOT.

7. *Went out with an high hand.* That is, openly, boldly, powerfully, in the full view of the Egyptians, and with the air not of a company of renegadoes, but of a mighty army. So to sin 'with a high hand,' Num. 15. 30, is to sin openly, fearlessly, and audaciously.

9. *Overtook them encamping by the sea.* Upon this passage the Editor of the Pictorial History of Palestine re-

10 ¶ And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel [n] cried out unto the LORD.

[n] Josh. 24. 7. Neh. 9. 9. Ps. 34. 17. & 107. 6.

marks, 'We do not agree with those who think that the king of Egypt came upon the encamped Hebrews through the valley of Bedea, in the plain at the mouth of which they were encamped. As he was so glad to find how they had 'entangled themselves in the land,' he was not likely to take a course which would deprive him of all the advantages derivable from their apparent oversight. This he would do by coming upon them through the valley of Bedea, for this would have left open to them the alternative of escaping from their position by the way they entered; whereas, by coming the same way they had come, he shut up that door of escape; and if they fled before him, left them no other visible resource but to march up the valley of Bedea, back to Egypt, before the Egyptian troops. That this was really the advantage to himself which the king saw in their position, and that it was his object to drive them before him back to Egypt through this valley, or to destroy them if they offered to resist, we have not the least doubt: and it is unlikely that he would take any road but that which would enable him to secure these benefits.' To this view of the subject we do not object as far as the *main body* of Pharaoh's army is concerned. They would no doubt pursue the Hebrew caravan in the same route which it travelled, but as the Egyptians doubtless kept themselves informed of every movement of the Israelites, we would suggest the probability that a *detachment* of Pharaoh's forces took their march through the valley of Tih, in order to intercept their escape through that avenue. They would thus be effectually hemmed in on every side, and no possible mode of extrication remained for them, unless the sea opened to let them pass through it. The Egyptians being satisfied that they had secured their prey, and that it was impossible for their fugitive bondsmen to escape, were in no haste to assail them. They were themselves also probably wearied by their rapid march. They therefore encamped for the night —for it was towards evening when they arrived — intending, no doubt, to give effect to their intentions in the morning.

10. *And when Pharaoh drew nigh*, &c. However much reason we have before had to wonder at the obstinacy and unbelief of Pharaoh, we have here occasion to vent our astonishment at the unbelief of those in whom we should least expect it. The sight of their old oppressors struck the Israelites with terror. Pervaded by a general panic, their faith and their courage seemed to desert them at once. They deplored the rash adventure in which they had engaged, and their servile minds looked back with regret and envy upon the enslaved condition under which they had so recently sighed. But wherefore did they now give way to fear? Could they not look back upon the wonders which God had wrought for them so short a time before? Could they not remember the recent death of all the first-born in Egypt? Could they not fix their eye on the pillar of cloud, and encourage themselves in that immediate token of God's presence with them and his care for them? True indeed, they were in a strait, a very great strait, and their peril was imminent. They were surrounded with dangers on all sides. The mountains, the sea, the pursuing hosts of Egypt pressed close upon them on every hand. In ordinary circumstances there was no doubt, occasion for the greatest

11 °And they said unto Moses, Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

° Ps. 106. 7, 8.

alarm. But they were not in ordinary circumstances. They had lately witnessed a series of most extraordinary proofs that God had taken up their cause. They knew, moreover, that it was the same God who had so miraculously appeared in their behalf, and brought them out of Egypt, that had conducted them to the perilous position which they now occupied, and they were bound to believe that in all this he intended them good and not evil, and that his omnipotence would in some way make sure their rescue. Their fears therefore were groundless, and their complaints inexcusable. They showed in this too much of the spirit of Pharaoh himself. They were as forgetful of the Lord's mercies which they had experienced, as he of the judgments which he had suffered. The similarity however of our own conduct in trying circumstances should no doubt abate our surprise at the perverseness of Israel. Alas, how little can *we ourselves* exercise faith and trust, in *our own* dangers and troubles! How prone are *we* to forget our past mercies, how incapable to see our present help, how ready to count God our enemy when his providence frowns, and after all our experience of his truth to cry out, 'We shall one day perish?' Let then the spirit of self-reproof temper our condemnation of unbelieving Israel.

11. *And they said unto Moses, Because*, &c. Had the Israelites merely given way to the inward promptings of an ignoble fear, or confined the expression of it to one another, we should have been less disposed to condemn, although even then we should not have been able to excuse it. But when we see their fears exciting them to murmur against Moses, as the procuring cause of their distresses, we can scarcely prevent a feeling of the indignant from mingling with our surprise. It was at once an ebullition of rank injustice and ingratitude towards Moses, and a gross provocation of God, in obedience to whose orders he had taken every step towards their deliverance. We do not forget, although they did, that all his great interests were embarked with theirs in this enterprise. His lot was cast into the common lap. He had made a sacrifice unspeakably greater than any other individual of the immense congregation. His prospects, either for himself or his family, were no more bright or flattering than those of the obscurest Hebrew. If there were danger from the pursuing host of Pharaoh, his share, assuredly, was not less than that of any other man. He had rendered himself peculiarly obnoxious to the unrelenting tyrant, and must have been among the first victims of his resentment. In view of this treatment we feel that if others might be offended, Moses might burn; and yet in the midst of these trying circumstances, he affords us a noble example of the meekness and forbearance for which he was so distinguished. In the danger which appeared, and in the unreasonable and wicked complaining of the people against him, he stood unmoved. Far from remonstrating with them or vindicating himself, he discovered the most admirable composure of mind, aiming to comfort and encourage instead of chiding them, and assuring them that they had nothing to do but to remain quiet and wait. They need neither flee nor fight. That was the last time that the Egyptians should cause them either fear or trouble. The Lord should fight for them and they should soon see the unreasonableness

12 p *Is* not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For *it had been* better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

13 ¶ And Moses said unto the people, q Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

14 r The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall s hold your peace.

p ch. 5. 21. & 6. 9. q 2 Chron. 20. 15, 17. Isai. 41. 10, 13, 14.

r ver. 25. Deut. 1. 30. & 3. 22. & 20. 4. Josh. 10. 14, 42. & 23. 3. 2 Chron. 20. 29. Neh. 4. 20. Isai. 31. 4. s Isai. 30. 15.

of their alarms, and be ashamed of their unjust suspicions and complaints.

12. *Is not this the word*, &c. We do not indeed previously read of their uttering these precise words, but this was the spirit, the drift, of their desponding expostulations with Moses and Aaron when they found their burdens increased. The language breathes the most deplorable sordidness and pusillanimity of soul, as if their spirits had been utterly broken down and crushed by their long bondage. Because their liberty was attended with some dangers and difficulties, they speak of it with virtual contempt, as if a state of servitude were to be preferred! Had they possessed the generous spirits of *men*, they would have said it was better, if needs be, to die on the field of honor than to live in the chains of slavery. Why should the idea of a grave in the wilderness be so dreadful to them? Why should they prefer to it a grave in Egypt? It was but a grave at the worst; only if they died now, they died at once; died like men defending their lives, liberty, and families; not pouring out their lives, drop by drop, under the whip of a cruel taskmaster. But slavery had done its work in extinguishing the nobler impulses of their nature, and the native unbelief and depravity of the human heart had put the finishing stroke to their perverseness.

13. *Fear ye not, stand still.* Heb. התיצבו *hithyatzebu, stand firm;* waver not stagger not, in your minds.——¶ *See the salvation of the Lord.* That is, experience, enjoy the salvation. See on this peculiar use of the word 'see' the Note on Gen. 42. 1.——¶ *For the Egyptians whom ye have seen*, &c. Heb. 'For in what manner ye have seen the Egyptians to-day ye shall not add to see them any more for ever;' i. e. ye shall not see them *alive* any more.

14. *Ye shall hold your peace.* Heb. התרשון *taharishun, ye shall be silent;* a term denoting here, as in many other instances, not so much a cessation from *noise* as from *action*, equivalent to remaining still, quiet, or inert. Thus, 2 Kings, 19. 11, 'Why *are ye the last* to bring the king back from his house?' Heb. 'Why are ye *silent* from bringing,' &c.; i. e. why are ye *negligent?* Ps. 83. 1, 'Keep not thou *silence*, O God;' i. e. do not *forbear to act*. Ps. 5. 3, 'Our God shall come and not *keep silence;*' i. e. shall not *remain inactive*. By this usage of the term we are assisted in the interpretation of Rev. 8. 1, 'And when we had opened the seventh seal there was *silence* in heaven about the space of half an hour;' i. e. there was a respite from action; the various symbolical agents who had hitherto been so busily employed in the visionary heaven, came to a temporary pause, representing some epoch in the state of the church when a series of stirring and momentous events, a succession of wars and commotions, were followed by a profound, though not a lasting calm. Such is the import of the symbol, and

15 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

16 But [t] lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea,

[t] ver. 21, 26. ch. 7. 19.

it is the province of the prophetic expositor to ascertain from the records of history with what era of the church the vision corresponds. In the case before us, the prophet's words are strikingly pertinent, Isa. 30. 7, 'Therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.'

15. *Wherefore criest thou unto me?* As nothing has been before said of Moses' crying or praying to the Lord in express words, we may suppose either that his crying on this occasion was in strong inward ejaculations and groanings, mingled perhaps with an undue perturbation of spirit, or that Moses is here addressed as the representative of the people; not as crying in his own person, but in that of the collective body of which he was the head. The first is the most probable supposition, and it naturally suggests the inquiry how it could be wrong for Moses to pray under these circumstances? Does not God himself say, Ps. 4. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me.' To this it may be answered, that in the present case there was *no occasion* to cry to the Lord; for he had already manifested so decidedly that he was determined to deliver his people, that neither they nor Moses ought to have had a doubt about it. And again, this was *no time* for prayer. There was something else to be instantly done. It was the time for him and them to act. 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.' Let us remember that every thing is beautiful in its season. Times there often are when it is proper and necessary that we should enter our

and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea.

17 And I, behold, I will [u] harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will

[u] ver. 8. ch. 7. 3.

chambers, and shut the door upon us, and commune with our own hearts and with God—often times when it might be well for us even to spend whole nights in prayer—often also sudden emergencies when we must cry with our whole souls to God. But there are other times when we are required to exert ourselves actively, and to show our faith in the promises of God by entering without fear or care or delay into the greatest straits and dangers.—¶ *Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.* Though the sea was directly before them, and its depths seemed utterly to deny them a passage, yet as the power that *made* the sea bade them advance, it was certain that he would either divide, or congeal, or exhaust it, so that it should offer no obstruction to their crossing. This is no strange language to the Christian. In the most difficult and appalling circumstances, the command is often to be heard by us, 'Go forward.' Though there may be mountains of opposition, or waves of trouble, or seas of danger, in the path of duty, yet the word is 'Go forward.' Faith has its most perfect work in the hour of darkness. Follow its guidance and 'a way shall be made in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters.'

16. *Lift thou up thy rod—and divide it.* Heb. בְּקָעֵהוּ *bekaëhu, cleave it.* Gr. ῥηξον αυτην, *rend it.* No efficacy of course is to be attributed on this or any former occasion to the rod, or even to Moses, in producing an effect to which Omnipotence alone was competent. But it was proper that Moses as an instrument should appear conspicuous in the transaction, in order that God might

x get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

18 And the Egyptians y shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

19 ¶ And the angel of God z which went before the camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

x ver. 4. y ver. 4. z ch. 13. 21. & 23. 20. & 32. 34. Numb. 20. 16. Isai. 63. 9.

20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and a it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it gave light by night *to these:* so that the one came not near the other all the night.

21 And Moses b stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and c made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were d divided.

a See Isai. 8. 14. 2 Cor. 4. 3. b ver. 16 c Ps. 66. 6. d ch. 15. 8. Josh. 3. 16 & 4. 23. Neh. 9. 11. Ps. 74. 13. & 106. 9. & 114. 3 Isai. 63. 12

thus give a new attestation, in the sight of the whole host, to the authority with which he was clothed, in order to secure for him a suitable degree of respect, honor, and obedience in all their subsequent relations.

19. *And the angel of God—removed*, &c. The Israelites were still in their encampment, waiting with trembling solicitude the crisis of their fate. What must have been their astonishment to see, all at once, the pillar of the cloud, which was in front of them, move round in silent majesty through the air, and take its place in their rear! 'The glory of the Lord became their rere-ward!' Yet it appears that some delay was still to occur before they began to enter upon the bed of the sea, as a strong east wind was to be raised, and by its action the waters so disposed of as to facilitate the passage. As to the relation of the terms 'Angel of God' and 'pillar of the cloud,' see the Remarks at the close of the preceding chapter.

20. *It was a cloud and darkness* to them, *but it gave light by night* to these. The supplementary words in our version show that the Hebrew here is elliptical. The sense, however, is undoubtedly correctly rendered. Chal. 'It was an obscure cloud to the Egyptians, but a light during all the night to the Israelites.' Jerus. Targ. 'It was a cloud half lucid and half dark; the light gave light unto Israel, and the darkness gave darkness unto the Egyptians.' Thus the word and the providences of God have a two-fold aspect, a black and dark side towards sin and sinners, a bright and pleasant side towards those that are Israelites indeed. On the former the Most High looks frowningly in wrath; on the latter his countenance shines brightly with favor. That which is a savor of life unto life to the one, is a savor of death unto death to the other. The distinction thus made in this respect between the two hosts is a preintimation of the eternal distinction which will be made between the inheritance of the saints in light, and that utter darkness which will for ever be the portion of hypocrites.

21. *The Lord caused the sea to go* back *by a strong east wind.* Heb. רוּחַ קָדִים עַזָּה *beruah kadim azzah.* The immediate effect of the stretching out of Moses' hand and wielding the potent rod, was not the division of the waters, but the raising of the wind, which thenceforward continued to blow through the rest of the night. The circumstance, as read in our version, creates some difficulty in reconciling every part of the narrative. Although the original does not *necessarily* imply that the wa-

22 And [e]the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea

[e] ver. 29. ch. 15. 19. Numb. 33. 8. Ps. 66. 6. & 78. 13. Isai. 63. 13. 1 Cor. 10. 1. Hebr. 11. 29.

upon the dry *ground*: and the waters *were* [f]a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their *left*.

[f] Hab. 3. 10.

ters 'went back' from the western shore of the Gulf, inasmuch as there is no word answering to 'back,' yet there is the utmost probability that this was the fact, as otherwise it would be more natural to say that the Lord caused the waters 'to come,' than 'to go.' But how is this to be reconciled with the inevitable effects of a strong east wind acting upon the same mass of waters? This would have been to drive the waters from the eastern and heap them up to a great depth on the western side, where the Israelites were to make their entrance. As the sea was undoubtedly cloven asunder by miraculous power over and above any effect produced by the wind, it would matter little to Omnipotence whether it was swollen most on the eastern or western coast. But from a comparison of all the incidents we rather infer that the body of the waters had been rolled up as it were by the force of the wind from the western to the eastern side of the sea, and that it was through this agglomerated fluid mass that the passage was opened. To this view of the subject it will of course be objected that the wind in question is expressly said to have been the *east wind*. But we reply that the original term קדרם *kadim*, has rather a generic than a specific import, and denotes *any uncommonly strong or violent wind*, from whatever quarter it blows. Accordingly it is rendered by the Vulg. in this very passage, 'a vehement and burning wind,' and Rosenmuller adduces the following passages as confirming the above interpretation: Ps. 48. 7, 'Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an *east wind* (קדרם);' i. e. as expressly rendered in the Gr. *εν πνευματι βιαιῳ, with a violent wind*. Ezek. 27. 26, 'Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the *east wind* (קדרם) hath broken thee in the midst of the seas;' i. e. any kind of fierce and tempestuous wind. So Job, 27. 20, 21, speaking of the wicked rich man; 'Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The *east wind* (קדרם) carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.' Here it can only be by a rhetorical figure that any particular wind is specified. The idea is obviously that of violent wind in general. Comp. Jer. 18. 17, and Is. 27. 8, in the latter of which places קדרם *east wind* is made synonymous with רוח קשה *rough wind*.——¶ *Were divided*. Heb. ויבקעו *yibbake-u, were cloven, were violently sundered*; usually applied to the cleaving or splitting of rocks, wood, the earth, or solid substances in general, and consequently a term not well suited in itself to describe the effects of the wind.

22. *The children of Israel went into*, &c. From the calm and unimpassioned tone of the narrative, we should scarcely imagine that the writer was describing one of the most stupendous miracles ever wrought in the view, or for the benefit, of mortals. While the immense congregation stands in mute expectation, with its countless eyes fastened on Moses and Aaron, whose movements would be a signal for their own, these venerated leaders advanced together into the untrodden path, and at once the yielding waters divide, and contrary to all the laws of fluids stand erect on either hand like walls of solid ice! The bed of the sea appears between them, and lost in amazement on this highway of the Lord's ransomed they pass through dry-shod and reach in safety the opposite shore! 'The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were

23 ¶ And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them, to the midst of the sea, *even* all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

afraid: the depths also were troubled. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' Ps. 77. 16—20.

23. *And the Egyptians pursued*, &c. It is by no means clear that the Egyptians knew or thought they were following the Israelites into the bed of the sea. Considering the darkness additional to that of the night, which had been superinduced between the pursuers and the pursued, it is not probable that they had any clear perception of the course in which they were moving, and least of all that they imagined themselves travelling on the bared bed of the divided waters. They could hear the noise of the flying host before them, and could see confusedly a little way about their feet, but in all likelihood were utterly unable to distinguish the localities around them, and may even have thought that they were following the Israelites up the valley of Bedea on their return to Egypt. But by the time the day broke they became aware of their condition, and a fearful discovery did it prove to them.

We may here remark that although the precise place of the Israelites' crossing the western Gulf of the Red Sea is by many writers placed higher up in the immediate vicinity of Suez, yet to our mind the evidence decidedly predominates in favor of a point some ten or twelve miles farther south. It is true that Niebuhr, Leclerc, Rosenmuller, Prof. Robinson, and others, advocate the claims of the former locality, but after the thorough canvassing of their arguments by the Editor of the Pictorial Bible, we cannot refuse our assent to the conclusions to which he comes in the following Note on Ex. 14. 2: 'Let us then proceed down the valley between the mountains and the sea, which we have supposed the Israelites to have taken. At the distance of about fifteen miles below Suez, occurs Ras (Cape) Addagi projecting into the sea, and which is formed by the termination of a cluster of hills about five miles in length, which now interpose *on the left* between the valley and the sea, so that the road in this part has mountains on either hand for several miles. Was the entrance of this defile the mouth of the *Hiroth*, or pass, before which the Hebrews encamped? The cape on the opposite coast is called Ras (Cape) Moses, and near this are the Fountains of Moses (Ain Mousa), which one of the most distinct traditions points out as the scene of the miracle. The claims of Ain Mousa above Suez in the present, and indeed in *any*, state of the gulf, are, that if the Israelites crossed here, they must have been more completely 'shut in' than at Suez, between the mountains, the wilderness, and the sea—that it is far enough from the bottom of the gulf to account for the Egyptians not going round to intercept them as they came up from the sea—that the waters being here deeper and broader, the miracle would be the more conspicuous and unquestionable, and at the same time the waters would be the more adequate to overwhelm the Egyptian host; while still the channel is not too broad for the Hebrew host to pass through in a single night. It is true that Dr. Shaw does not think the water deep enough even here; but there is every reason to conclude that the water was deeper formerly than at present, and the same objection certainly applies with still greater force to the passage at Suez. Let us however proceed southward, and having traversed the pass, and continued our course along the shore, we come to an expansion or bay, forming the mouth,

24 And it came to pass, that in the morning-watch g the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,

g See Ps. 77. 17, &c.

towards the Red Sea, of a valley or opening in the mountains, which is here called *Badea*, and also *Wady Tyh*, or 'the Valley of Wandering,' and which, under the various names of Wady Ramlia, Derb Towarek, Wady Jendeli, &c. extends from the Nile to the Red Sea, and through which a canal of communication seems to have formerly ran. Was this the Hiroth, or pass, before or in the mouth of which the Israelites encamped, and from which they afterwards made their famous passage? Many good authorities are of this opinion; and it deserves to be mentioned that D'Anville and Major Rennel concur in fixing the town of Clysma at this spot. Certainly no body of men could be more effectually shut in than in this bay of Badea. There are many indications that an arm of the sea, now filled up, stretched a considerable way into the opening at this place, and must have prevented all further progress to the south; and if such progress had not been thus prevented, it would be so by the mountains of Ghobede, which bound the bay and valley on the south, and which, with their continuations, stand out so close to the sea as to preclude the continuation of the march along the shore. There was therefore no retreat but through the sea, or back to Egypt through the valley; and, on the hypothesis that there was then, as at present, a practicable road through this valley between the Red Sea and the Nile, we hazard a conjecture, that it was Pharaoh's intention to drive them back before him through this valley. As names and traditions, on one side of the sea, point the egress of the Hebrews at Ain Mousa—as, on the other side, the same authorities place the ingress at Badea—and as it is necessary to assume that the opening was most extensive, we might hazard a conjecture that the whole opening extended from about Ain Mousa to opposite Badea. We must again repeat, however, that not the least stress is to be laid on the unsupported traditions of the natives. Ain Mousa is only one out of many places which they indicate as the point of passage. Perhaps the place which both Arabian and Egyptian traditions most strongly indicate is the large bay called *Birket Faroun* (Pharaoh's Pool), about the 29th parallel of latitude. The waters of this bay are in continual commotion, which the natives think to be occasioned by the unquiet spirits of the drowned. But the passage cannot reasonably be fixed here or any where else below Wady Gharendel at the lowest: for not only does the gulf from thence downward become too wide to have been crossed by such a body as the host of Israel in one night, but the shore, which till thereabout is low and sandy, then becomes rocky and mountainous, while that on the Egyptian side is still more impracticable—affording a convenient place neither for the ingress nor egress of such a multitude. Upon the whole, we should think the claims of Ain Mousa far preferable to those of Suez, and those of Badea at least equal to those of Ain Mousa.' *Pict. Bible.*

24. *In the morning watch.* The Jews divided the whole night from sun-setting till sun-rising, into three watches, consisting each of four hours. The morning watch began at two in the morning and ended about six.——¶ *Looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud.* Heb. בעמוד *be-ammud; in or by the pillar;* i. e. by means of it. The original word for 'looked,' as applied to God, denotes

25 And took off their chariot-wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD [h] fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

[h] ver. 14.

26 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, [i] Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

[i] ver. 16.

not a simple and bare act of ocular inspection, but also a *positive putting forth* of some demonstration of wrath or mercy corresponding with the occasion. Thus Ps. 102. 19, 20, 'For he hath *looked down* from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death;' i. e. his *looking down* consisted in his interposition in behalf of the afflicted. Deut. 26. 15, '*Look down* from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people;' i. e. *look down* by blessing. So here the Lord's 'looking' is explained by what follows, viz. his 'troubling' them. We suppose the fact to have been that the side of the pillar of cloud toward the Egyptians was suddenly and for a few moments illuminated with a blaze of light, which coming as it were in a refulgent flash upon the dense darkness which had preceded, so frightened the horses of the pursuers that they rushed confusedly together, dashing the wheels of one chariot furiously against those of another, upsetting, breaking, and tearing them from their axles, while the horses themselves, floundering in pools, or sinking in quicksands, were thrown into inextricable confusion, and thus became an easy prey to the returning waves. In the mean time, as is evident from the words of the Psalmist, Ps. 77. 17, 18, the elements were wrought into a fearful commotion, which redoubled the horrors of the scene; 'The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heavens; thy lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook.' With this agrees the description of Josephus; 'Showers of rain also came down from the sky, and dreadful thunder and lightning, with flashes of fire. Thunderbolts also were darted upon them; nor was there any thing which God sends upon men as indications of his wrath, which did not happen at this time.' The complicated horrors of the scene can neither be described nor imagined. It was evident beyond all dispute that the Lord God Almighty fought against them, and the lighting down of his arm who could withstand? Officers and soldiers, Pharaoh and his commanders, were alike terror-stricken, and one universal thrill of panic and dismay pervaded the host of the Egyptians. 'Let us flee,' was the cry that resounded in every direction, through the broken and trembling ranks, but, alas, it was now too late. All attempts at flight were vain. The day of forbearance was passed. The measure of their iniquity was full. The tyrant and his people had hardened themselves in rebellion against God till his patience was exhausted, and the day of vengeance was come. They are first frightened into despair, and then plunged into destruction. —— ¶ *The Egyptians said*, &c. Heb. ויאמר מצרים *va-yomer Mitzraim, Egypt*, or *the Egyptian, said, Let us flee;* indicating that they were as unanimous in making this declaration, as if they had been but one man. But they were like persons oppressed with the nightmare in their sleep, who would fain fly from the impending danger that presses upon them, but cannot. An invisible power fixes them to the spot.

27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea [k] returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD [l] overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

28 And [m] the waters returned, and [n] covered the chariots, and the horsemen, *and* all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: there remained not so much as one of them.

29 But [o] the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

30 Thus the LORD [p] saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians: and Israel [q] saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore.

[k] Josh. 4. 18. [l] ch. 15. 1, 7 [m] Hab. 3. 8, 13. [n] Ps. 106. 11.

[o] ver. 22. Ps. 77. 20. & 78. 52, 53. [p] Ps. 106. 8, 10. [q] Ps. 58. 10. & 59. 10.

27. *And Moses stretched forth his hand*, &c. The rod of Moses is again stretched over the sea, and it returns to its strength. Those very waters which had guarded the passage of Israel, again obey the suspended law of gravitation, and rushing down upon the heads of the Egyptians with overwhelming force engulph them all beyond the power or possibility of escape. Prostrated by the fury of the resistless flood, wave after wave passing over them, they pierce the air with the shrieks of hopeless anguish, and in all their multitudes are buried beneath the deep, which roared in closing upon them like a ravenous beast over his prey. 'The sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.' The same element is the defence of the one, and the destroyer of the other. Not an Israelite perished, not an Egyptian survived. What an awful retribution upon the incorrigible king and people who had hardened themselves against God, bidding defiance to his demands, his threatenings, his judgments! Here he lies with all his host, men, horses, and chariots, merged in one common watery grave, as a perpetual monument of the folly of rebellious man, and the just wrath of offended heaven!——¶ *The Lord overthrew the Egyptians.* Heb. וינער *yenaër*, *shook off*. That is, cast away, rid himself of. The force of the original may be better understood from the following examples of its use. Nehem. 5. 13, 'Also I *shook* my lap and said, So God *shake out* every man from his house that performeth not this promise, even thus be he *shaken out*.' Job, 38. 13 'That it might take hold of the ends of the earth that the wicked might be *shaken out* of it.' The same original word occurs, Ps. 136. 15, in allusion to this same event, though translated as here 'overthrow.' So absolutely and utterly was the power of this guilty nation now broken and destroyed, that although the camp of Israel was pitched within a little distance of Egypt, during the space of forty years, yet no pursuit was attempted against them, no future effort made to subdue and enslave them.

30. *Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore.* Heb. וירא אתם מצרים מת *yiru eth Mitzrayim mëth*, *saw Egypt*, or *the Egyptians, a corpse*; the whole nation spoken of as one individual. This was ordered at once for the greater disgrace of the Egyptians, and the greater triumph of the Israelites. However superstitiously nice and curious that people were in embalming and preserving the bodies of their great men, and whatever horror was inspired by their religion at the idea of lying unburied till their bodies were consumed, still that dreaded doom was here allotted them, and the utmost contempt thus poured upon the nobles of Egypt. In short, it was little else than

31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and [r] believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

[r] ch. 4. 31. & 19. 9. Ps. 106. 12. John. 2. 11. & 11. 45.

dragging out the dead body of the slain Egyptian dragon from the waters and proclaiming over it, 'I will leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee.' Ezek. 32. 4. It is perhaps in allusion to this that we read, Rev. 19. 17, 18, 'And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.' Such a result would also heighten the expression of the divine favor towards Israel, and more deeply affect their hearts with their great deliverance. They probably stripped the bodies of the slain, and thus possessed themselves of a mass of treasure which they were afterwards able to apply to the furnishing of the tabernacle. Nothing can be more striking than the manner in which these incidents are figuratively set forth by the Psalmist, Ps. 74. 13, 14, 'Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.'

31. *Israel saw that great work.* Heb. את היד הגדלה *eth ha-yad haggedolah, that great hand*; or as the Chal. expressively renders it, 'The power of the great hand.' The import is plainly that of an amazing display of the divine omnipotence. It was scarcely necessary to pray for them in the language of David, Ps. 109. 27, 'That they may know that *this is thy hand*, that thou, Lord, hast done it.' Conviction of this truth was now wrought in the depths of their souls. 'Deep answered unto deep.' The language is very emphatic, that they now began in earnest to 'fear the Lord and believe the Lord,' in view of the wonders of his mercy and his might, and to yield themselves more unreservedly to the guidance of his servant Moses. They were now profoundly ashamed of their former distrusts and murmurings, and doubtless were ready to conclude, from their present feelings, that they should never relapse into a complaining spirit or a disobedient conduct again. Infidelity and rebellion are, for a time at least, banished from their hearts, and 'while they believe his word, they sing his praise;' although their subsequent demeanor showed that they were still capable of forgetting and slighting their heavenly benefactor.

CHAPTER XV.

The preceding chapter having given us an account of the total overthrow and destruction of the Egyptians, we are informed in the present of the manner in which the signal victory was celebrated. The circumstances which called forth this grateful song of praise here recorded, were indeed unparalleled. We behold an immense congregation just rescued in a marvellous manner from the power of their enemies, standing upon the shores of a sea which was then rolling its waves in their usual course, waves which had so lately been made to stand as crystal walls on either side of a dry passage, and which had again rushed together in their might, overwhelming all the chariots, and horses, and footmen of Pharaoh. There they stand, seeing the shores of the sea

CHAPTER XV.

THEN sang [a] Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will [b] sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

[a] Judg. 5. 1. 2 Sam. 22. 1. Ps. 106. 12.

[b] ver. 21.

strewed with the dead bodies of men and horses, with the broken pieces of chariots and weapons of war scattered in all directions, and all the other wrecks of that awful catastrophe. There they stand, safe and unhurt, not a feeble woman, not an infant child, not a hoof of cattle, not an article of property, lost—all monuments of the mighty power and distinguishing favor of their covenant God! Well may they lift up their voices and sing. Well may they bring the timbrel and harp to aid their voices in celebrating the praises of their great deliverer.—It may be remarked, by the way, that here, as in many other instances, the Old Testament narrative has afforded the ground for one of the most striking features of the symbolical scenery of the Apocalypse, ch. 15. 2, 3, 'And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true thy ways, thou King of saints.' The phrase '*on* the sea of glass' is, undoubtedly, more correctly rendered '*by* the sea of glass,' i. e. on the shores, while the mingling of the fire is perhaps in allusion to the pillar of fire which accompanied the march of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and whose terrific flashings mingled with the returning and roaring billows that overwhelmed the Egyptian hosts.

1. *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song*, &c. Heb. אָז יָשִׁיר *az yashir*, lit. *then will sing*. As the verb in the original is in the future, perhaps the suggestion may not be wholly groundless, that it is hereby implied that this song was to serve as a model for the triumphant songs of the church in subsequent ages, somewhat as the Lord's prayer is designed as a model for the prayers of his disciples in every period of the world. Accordingly, we find it said of those, Rev. 15. 2, 3, who had obtained a victorious deliverance from the thraldom of the beast, that they sung *the song of Moses and the Lamb*, in evident allusion to the sublime pean here recorded. The present is the most ancient song extant in any language, as those ascribed to Linus, Musaeus, and Orpheus, have a date of three hundred years subsequent to this. Its poetical merits are of the very first order, as we might infer from the undoubted fact, that it was prompted by divine inspiration, to be sung on the spot, and probably on the very morning of the event which it celebrates. It is alike remarkable for its grandeur and simplicity, its touching pathos and its true sublime. It was probably sung in alternate strophes or strains, as was usual in all the sacred symphonies of the ancients.——¶ *I will sing*, &c. Intimating that although the song was to be sung by the whole company, yet each one was to appropriate the burden of it to himself individually. The triumph of Israel over the Egyptians did not resemble the usual triumphs of nation over nation, where the individual is overlooked and lost in the mass. Every thing here is peculiar and personal. Every Israelite for himself reflects with joy on his own chains now for ever broken. He seems to exult over his *own* tyrant-master now sub-

2 The LORD *is* my strength and [a]song, and he is become my salvation: he *is* my God, and I will [c]

[c] Deut. 10. 21. Ps. 18. 2. & 22. 3. & 59. 17. & 62. 6. & 109. 1. & 118. 14. & 140. 7. Isai. 12. 2. Hab. 3. 18, 19.

dued under him, and hails his *own* personal liberty as fully recovered.——¶ *Hath triumphed gloriously.* Heb. גאה גאה *gaoh gaah, excelling he excelleth*, or, *he is exceedingly exalted.* Gr. ενδοξως γαρ δεδοξασται, *for he is gloriously glorified.* The leading idea of the Hebrew term in this connexion is, that of displaying *grandeur, preeminence, magnificence.* It is perhaps primarily applied, in a physical sense, to corporeal objects which *grandly raise and rear themselves up*, as towering trees and swelling waves (Ezek. 47. 5); and thence, in mental relations, denoting *elation, self-exaltation*, whether in a good or bad sense. As used here in reference to God there can be no mistake as to its import. Chal. 'He hath exalted himself above the excellent ones, and excellence is his.'——¶ *The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.* Heb. רמה *ramah, violently cast, precipitated, projected;* a bold and emphatic mode of expression, implying far more than if he had merely said that he *suffered them to sink into the sea.* The expression is strikingly paralleled in Neh. 9. 11, 'Their persecutors thou *threwest* into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters.' In like manner the use of 'horse' and 'rider' in the singular is more emphatic than that of 'horses' and 'riders' in the plural. It marks strongly the suddenness, the universality, the completeness, of the destruction. The Egyptian cavalry, numerous and formidable, covering the face of the ground, is represented as in a moment, by a single effort, by one blow, overthrown, overwhelmed, as if they had been but *one* horse and *one* rider.

2. *The Lord is my strength and song.*

prepare him [d]an habitation; my [e]father's God, and I [f]will exalt him.

[d] Gen. 28. 21, 22. 2 Sam. 7. 5. Ps. 132. 5. [e] ch. 3. 15, 16. [f] 2 Sam. 22. 47. Ps. 99 5. & 118. 28. Isai. 25. 1.

Heb. עזי וזמרת יה *ozzi ve-zimrath Yah, my strength and my song is Jah;* one of the distinguishing titles of the Most High, a contraction of 'Jehòvah,' occurring here for the first time in the Scriptures, and seldom met with except in the poetical books. We find it Ps. 68. 4, 'Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name Jah.' It enters also into the composition of the Hebrew phrase הללו יה *halleluyah*, i. e. 'Hallelu,' *praise ye*, 'Jah,' *the Lord*, which is retained by the Holy Spirit in Rev. 19. 1—4, 'And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia, &c.' intimating, probably, by the use of a Hebrew word that at the period alluded to in the prophecy, the Jewish nation shall have become united with the Christian church, and shall be heard uttering the praises of God in their own language. By confessing that God was their 'strength,' they virtually abjure from themselves the glory of the recent triumph, ascribing it solely to the almighty power of their great and gracious Deliverer. No instrument is to divide the praise with him. No power, no wisdom, is to be acknowledged but that of God alone.——¶ *My song.* That is, the subject of it.——¶ *My salvation.* That is, the author of it.——¶ *I will prepare him a habitation.* Chal. 'I will build him a sanctuary.' This, if the Chaldee interpretation be correct, is a prophetical intimation of the rearing of the sacred edifice of the tabernacle. Some, however maintain that the word comes from a root signifying *to adorn*, in which case the sense of the expression is, *I will pay him becoming honor.* Thus Jarchi; 'I will celebrate his beauty and his praise to those that shall come into

3 The LORD *is* a man of [g] war: the LORD *is* his [h] name.

4 [i] Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: [k] his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.

5 [l] The depths have covered them: [m] they sank into the bottom as a stone.

[g] Ps. 24. 8. Rev. 19. 11. [h] ch. 6. 3. Ps. 83. 18. [i] ch. 14. 28. [k] ch. 14. 7. [l] ch. 14. 28. [m] Neh. 9. 11.

the world.' Gr. *δοξασω αυτον, I will glorify him.* As this honor, however, was to consist mainly in the dedication to him of a place of worship, both senses of the term very nearly harmonize.—¶ *My father's God.* Heb. אלהי אבי *Elohë abi, God of my father;* col. sing. implying the entire line of his paternal ancestry. The whole strain of the writer is full of affectionate and appropriating recognition of God as *their* God. 'He whose greatness I adore is not a strange God unknown till now, a deliverer or protector for a moment. No, he is the ancient and covenant God of my family; his goodness is from generation to generation. I have a thousand *domestic* proofs of his constant, undiminished affection; and he is now making good to me only that which he solemnly promised to my *forefathers.*' Such is the purport of this grateful strain.

3. *The Lord is a man of war.* Heb. איש מלחמה *ish milhamah.* That is, mighty in battle, the achiever of great victories. Chal. 'A victor of wars.' Gr. *κυριος συντριβων πολεμους, the Lord breaking wars;* a rendering for which it is difficult to account, and in respect to which Cartwright has very plausibly suggested that *πολεμους wars* is a corrupt reading for *πολεμιους enemies;* the Lord is a breaker-down, a prostrater, of all enemies. Some have thought there was something degrading in a form of expression which seemed to bring down the Deity to the level of a mere mortal hero; but it is to be borne in mind, that the phrase is purely Hebraic, and one of the most emphatic of which the language admits to denote *excellence* or *preeminence of prowess.* Thus the very same phrase occurs 1 Sam. 17. 33, as an appellation of Goliath, 'For thou art but a youth, and he איש מלחמה *a man of war* from his youth;' i. e. distinguished for warlike prowess and skill. Thus also we find 'man of beauty' for one exceedingly fair and comely; 'man of words,' for an eloquent man; 'man of arm,' for a mighty man, &c.—¶ *The Lord is his name.* Heb. יהוה שמו *Yehovah shemo, Jehovah his name.* That is, he hath shown his *nature* to be Jehovah, by causing that *actually to be* which he had promised *should be.* It is as if the speaker had said, 'I cannot characterise the mighty Deliverer so well as by his name Jehovah, that ineffable and mysterious title which implies not only the *promise* but the *performance* of every thing that relates to the well-being and happiness of his people.' See Note on Ex. 6. 3.

4. *Hath he cast into the sea.* Heb. ירה *yarah;* a term applied mostly to the *casting, hurling,* or *discharging* of darts or arrows. Accordingly Aben Esra, a Jewish commentator, remarks that it is designed here to imply, that God cast the chariots and the hosts of Pharaoh into the sea with as much swiftness and ease as one would emit an arrow from the bow.—¶ *His chosen captains.* Heb. מבחר שלשיו *mibhar shalishauv, the choice of his captains;* i. e. the prime, the flower, of his chieftains.

5. *Sank into the bottom as a stone.* Words strikingly expressive of the utter and remediless overthrow of the enemy. So completely were they plunged into the depth of the sea, that they could not rise to the surface, being probably for the most part encumbered with heavy

6 [n] Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

7 And in the greatness of thine [o] excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee:

[n] Ps. 118. 15, 16. [o] Deut. 33. 26.

armor, which would effectually prevent their rising or floating; while the guilt of their sins weighed still more heavily upon them.

6. *Thy right hand*, &c. Another form of expression for God's omnipotence. The right hand, being naturally the strongest from being most employed, is used by an apt metaphor for the highest degree of power. It is to be remarked moreover, that the verb in the original is in the future—'shall dash in pieces'—a remark which applies in fact to most of the verbs throughout the hymn. The phraseology is so constructed as to carry with it the implication that what *had happened* on this occasion to the enemies of God *would happen* in like manner in all future time, as far as utter discomfiture and signal perdition was concerned. On the other hand, in v. 14, and elsewhere, the verbs rendered in the future are in Heb. in the past, to indicate the infallible certainty of the event foretold.

7. *Overthrow them that rose up against thee.* Heb. קמיך *kameka, thy risers-up.* So near is the relation between God and his people, that he accounts what is done to them as done to himself.——¶ *Thou sentest forth thy wrath.* Like a dreadful projectile, thou didst direct thy wrath against the foes of Israel, scattering desolation and death. It quitted the guiding pillar of fire, like a flash of lightning or like the blighting blast of the desert, and as either withers the grass or shrinks up the standing corn, so did they fall prostrate before it, and perished under the stroke of divine vengeance. They were of no more

thou sentest forth thy wrath, *which* [p] consumed them [q] as stubble.

8 And [r] with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, [s] the floods stood upright as

[p] Ps. 59. 13. [q] Isai. 5. 24. & 47. 14. [r] ch. 14. 21. 2 Sam. 22. 16. Job. 4. 9. 2 Thess. 2. 8. [s] Ps. 78. 13. Hab. 3. 10.

account in thy sight than the useless stubble which is consumed by the sweeping autumnal fire.

8. *With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered*, &c. Heb. ברוח אפיך *beruah appēka*, with the wind, or spirit, of thine anger; the same word in the original signifying both 'nostril' and 'anger;' from the effect of anger in inflating the nostrils. This has respect to the stormy wind mentioned, ch. 14. 26, 27. Thus Job, 4. 9, 'By the blast of God they perish, and by the *breath of his nostrils* (מרוח אפו) are they consumed.' So it is said of the 'man of sin,' 2 Thes. 2. 8, that the Lord will 'consume him by *the spirit of his mouth*.' Nothing can be grander than the image here employed. It implies that the gathering together of the mighty waters was an immediate act of the divine power; the poet representing the Deity as emitting from his inflated nostrils the wind which produced an effect never before, nor since, witnessed by man. ——¶ *The depths were congealed.* A strong poetical expression not to be understood literally, but denoting that the waters maintained themselves in an upright position, with as much stability as if they had been converted to a wall of ice. The whole verse presents a beautiful gradation of sense. The waters were not only arrested in their channel and ceased to flow, but were *gathered together;* and not only were they gathered together, but they were fixed for the time in a condition entirely contrary to their natural tendency, and made *to stand upright* like a wall of masonry, or as firmly as if they had been *solidly congealed.*

an heap, *and* the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

θ [t]The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will [u]divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, mine hand shall destroy them.

10 Thou didst [x]blow with thy wind, [y]the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

11 [z]Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who *is* like thee, [a]glorious in holiness,

t Judg. 5. 30. u Gen. 49. 27. Isai. 53. 12. Luke 11. 22.

x ch. 14. 21. Ps. 147. 18. y ver. 5. ch. 14. 28. z 2 Sam. 7. 22. 1 Kings 8. 23. Ps. 71. 19. & 86. 8. & 89. 6, 8. Jer. 10. 6. & 49. 19. a Isai. 6. 3.

9. *The enemy said, I will pursue*, &c. The destruction of the Egyptians was more remarkable by reason of the pride and insolence which they displayed, and their strong assurance of success. The contrast between the confidence and elation of the pursuit, and the shame and ignominy of their overthrow, is made very impressive. They will not only pursue, but they will overtake, and if they overtake they have no question but they shall overcome, and obtain such a decisive victory as to divide the spoil. Thus it is that men are often never more confident and presumptuous than when they stand upon the very brink of ruin.——¶ *My lust shall be satisfied upon them.* Heb. תמלאמו נפשי *timlaïmo naphshi, my soul shall be filled with them.* See upon this peculiar signification of the word 'soul' the Note on Gen. 23. 8. The sentence expresses not only an intense desire, but a ruthless determination, of vengeance. The mere infliction of summary punishment upon a fugitive people who had quitted his dominions in opposition to his will, is not sufficient to satisfy the rage and vindictiveness of his spirit. He would give them up to slaughter and glut his implacable malice upon them. He is goaded on by a savage thirst of blood, and by the ordinary retributions of Providence has in the issue blood given him to the full.——¶ *My hand shall destroy them.* Or, Heb. תורישמו ידי *torishëmo yadi, my hand shall repossess them;* i. e. bring them back to slavery. The original term ירש *yarash* is very peculiar in its import. The sense of *possession* or *inheriting* is very evident in Num. 14. 24, 'Him will I bring into the land whereunto he went, and he shall *possess it* (יורשנה).' And yet in other cases the contrary sense of *disinheriting, dispossessing*, is equally obvious. Thus Num. 14. 12, 'I will smite them with the pestilence and *disinherit* (אורשנו) them.' Josh. 23. 5. 'And the Lord your God he shall expel them from before you, and *drive* (והורישׁ) them from out of your sight.' So also Deut. 4. 38. Jud. 1. 19—29. This apparent anomaly is to be accounted for from the fact, that the original, particularly in Hiphil, signifies *to inherit or possess in consequence of dispossessing another*, so that it is plainly equivalent to *driving out;* and to this the sense of *destroying, extirpating*, is closely analogous. The Greek here renders by κυριευσει ἡ χειρ μου, *my hand shall have dominion, or lord it.* Chal. 'My hand shall exterminate them.' Vulg. 'My hand shall slay them.'

10. *Thou didst blow with thy wind.* It was a wind raised by special divine intervention, not by the ordinary operation of nature. It was God's wind distinctly and preeminently; such a wind as caused the waters to accumulate and remain for a time stationary, or as the sacred text expresses it, 'to be congealed in the heart of the sea.'

11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?* Heb. באלים *ba-ëlim, among the mighties, among the potentates.* In these words the superiority is affirmed of the true God over all earthly princes and potentates, and over

fearful *in* praises, [b] doing wonders?

[b] Ps. 77. 14.

12 Thou stretchedst out [c] thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.

[c] ver. 6.

all the false and factitious gods of Egypt. A contrast is presented between the omnipotence of the former and the impotence of the latter What were the mightiest of men whose breath was in their nostrils; what were all the animal and reptile divinities to which that besotted people offered adoration, that they should be so much as named in comparison with the great and glorious God of the Hebrews, the Being of beings, the infinite, the almighty, the eternal!——¶ *Glorious in holiness.* Heb. נאדר בקדש *nedar bakkodesh.* Gr. *δεδοξασμενος εν ἁγιοις, glorified in the holy ones,* i. e. among the saints and angels; or, *in the holy things;* i. e. in holiness. God is glorious in that holiness and immaculate purity which constitute his perfection. It is an attribute which especially elicits the praises of the angelic hosts in heaven, Is. 6. 3, and which shone conspicuous on the present occasion. His holiness, his hatred of sin, his wrath against obstinate transgressors, never appeared more resplendently glorious than in the destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. The unsanctified heart may not respond to this character of the divine holiness, but to the soul which has been enlightened from above and gifted with a spiritual perception of the things of God, nothing appears so truly, so transcendently glorious, as this perfection of the immaculate Jehovah. It is, in fact, the crowning glory of the Godhead, and if it do not so appear to us, we have reason to be concerned at its relations to our character and destiny. ——¶ *Fearful in praises.* Heb. נורא תהלת *nora tehilloth, terrible, awful, reverend, as to praises,* i. e. in his praiseworthy manifestations of himself. Thus the Apostle, Philip. 4. 8, 'If there be any *praise;*' i. e. any thing praiseworthy. Even in those displays of his perfections, which are matter of joyful praise to his people, he is dreadful and terrible to his enemies; and the consideration of this fact should chasten and solemnize the tone of all our laudatory ascriptions. Though, we honor him with praises on our tongues, we should do it with an humble awe upon our spirits.——¶ *Doing wonders.* Heb. עשה פלא *oseh pelë, doing that which is wonderful.* Gr. ποιων τερατα, *doing signs or prodigies.* On the import of the original term פלא *pelë,* see Note on Judg. 13. 18, from which it will appear that it denotes that which is *preeminently marvellous* or *miraculously wonderful.* How justly the poet ascribes this character to Jehovah, the whole scope of the inspired history is a continued proof. Indeed the entire series of providential dispensations in the world is a tissue of *works of wonder.* But the children of Israel in their present circumstances would naturally have their eye more especially upon that succession of *miraculous judgments* which had visited and desolated the land of Egypt, and so prepared the way for their deliverance. We find a striking echo to the sentiment of this passage in the parallel language of Job, ch. 5. 9, 'Which doeth great things and unsearchable; *marvellous things* (נפלאות *niphlaoth*) without number.'

12. *The earth swallowed them.* This is nothing more than a poetical hyperbole, varying or rather strengthening the prior description of the Egyptians being overwhelmed in the mighty waters. They were so completely submerged and sunk to the bottom of the sea, that they might be said to be *swallowed* up by its deep abysses. 'Earth,' however, is here to be taken in its generic import as equivalent to 'globe,'

13 Thou in thy mercy hast [d] led forth the people *which* thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided *them* in thy strength unto [e] thy holy habitation.

[d] Ps. 77. 15, 20. & 78. 52. & 80. 1. & 106. 9. Isai. 63. 12, 13. Jer. 2. 6. [e] Ps. 78. 54.

14 [f] The people shall hear, *and* be afraid: [g] sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.

[f] Numb. 14. 14. Deut. 2. 25. Josh. 2. 9, 10. [g] Ps. 48. 6.

which does not regard the distinction of land and water. Thus Jon. 2. 6, 'I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the *earth* with her bars was about me forever;' i. e. I was engulphed in the deep places of the earth.

13. *Thou in thy mercy hast led forth*, &c. The poet here passes, by a sudden but natural transition, from the destruction of the Egyptians to the deliverance of the Israelites. This is very appropriate, as it places the two grand aspects of the event in strong and immediate contrast, the one that of justice, the other of mercy. How impressively are both presented before the mind in this transcendent song. While on the one hand thousands of wretched beings who knew not God, but had mocked him with their idolatries and provoked him with their rebellion, had been suddenly hurled into the embraces of death, they on the other had been graciously exempted from harm, rescued from bondage, restored to freedom! Great and manifold indeed were the mercies of God to his chosen, and richly were they worthy of the highest celebration.—— ¶ *Thou hast guided them*, &c. Heb. נחלת *nehalta*. The original in its legitimate sense signifies to *guide gently, softly, and with care*, as a good shepherd does his flock. It is the word used by the prophet, Is. 40. 11, 'He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and *gently lead* those that are with young.' Very pertinent to this are the words of the Psalmist, Ps. 77. 20, 'Thou *leddest thy people like a flock* by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' The phrase in the present instance is indeed rendered in the past, 'thou *hast* guided,' as if their destination had been actually reached, yet the meaning obviously is, that they were now *being guided*, that they were on the way which led toward the land of promise where they were to dwell, and where God was to dwell with them. Whether any thing more definite and precise than a peculiar residence or indwelling in the land of Canaan in general be intended, it is not perhaps possible to determine. This is called God's habitation simply because it was Israel's habitation, among whom he had engaged to *tabernacle* or dwell.

14. *The people shall hear and be afraid*, &c. The high poetic afflatus under which this sublime triumphal song was composed is nearly akin to the spirit of prophecy, and the verse before us evidently points to the future results of this signal victory, in its bearings upon the devoted nations of Canaan. The very tidings of such a tremendous overthrow of the Egyptians would go so far towards terrifying and disheartening their other enemies, that it would render the conquest of them comparatively easy. Their spirits would sink at the idea of grappling with such a power as evidently fought for Israel, and this secret misgiving, though it might not entirely preclude resistance, would yet so far weaken it, as to make them very little formidable in their warfare. That this was a true prediction we see at once by referring to the subsequent history. Josh. 5. 1, 'And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea,

15 [h]Then [i]the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; [k]the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; [l]all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

16 [m]Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be *as* still [n]as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, [o]*which* thou hast purchased.

[h] Gen. 36. 40. [i] Deut. 2. 4. [k] Numb. 22. 3. Hab. 3. 7. [l] Josh. 5. 1. [m] Deut. 2. 25. & 11. 25. Josh. 2. 9.

[n] 1 Sam. 25. 37. [o] ch. 19. 5. Deut. 32. 9. 2 Sam. 7. 23. Ps. 74. 2. Isai. 43. 1, 3. & 51. 10. Jer. 31. 11. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 2. 9. 2 Pet. 2. 1.

heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted; neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.'—— ¶ *The inhabitants of Palestina.* That is, the Philistines, from whom, although they inhabited only a part of it, the land of Palestine is supposed to have derived its denomination. They were not of the prophetically accursed seed of Canaan, nor are they enumerated among the nations devoted to extermination, whose territory God assigned to the Hebrews. But they maintained a hostile attitude towards the Israelites, with whom they had many battles, and after a long series of struggles they were finally effectually subdued by David.

15. *The dukes of Edom shall be amazed.* Heb. אלופי אדום *alluphë Edom.* On the import of the Heb. term 'alluph' see Note on Gen. 36. 15, 16.——¶ *All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.* Heb. נמגו *namogu;* a term to be understood rather of the mental despondency, the sinking away of courage and hope, than of the physical wasting and consumption of the Canaanites before the victorious arms of Israel. How accurately this depicts the result that actually occurred is evident from the parallel language, Josh. 2. 9—11, 'And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land *faint* (נמגו *namogu*) because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts *did melt* (רמס *yinmas*), neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you.' Throughout the whole context the gradations of distress are strikingly marked. First, there is to be *fear* among the people; then *sorrow* is to overtake the inhabitants of Palestine; next, the princes of Edom are to be *amazed* or *painfully disturbed;* then the Moabites shall *tremble* with terror; and, finally, the hearts of Canaan shall *melt away* with overwhelming dread of the coming disasters.

16. *Fear and dread shall fall upon them,* &c. This is but an expansion of the sentiment of the last clause of the preceding verse. They should be so utterly overcome with consternation that their energies should be paralyzed, and they should be unable to offer any effectual resistance. But let not Israel forget that 'it was not their own arm which would get them the victory.' It was to be by the greatness of God's arm, by the direct intervention of his power, that the inhabitants were thus to be rendered impotent in their alarm. ——¶ *They shall be as still as a stone.* Gr. απολιθωθητωσαν, *let them be turned into stones,* equivalent to the English phrase of being *petrified* with fear, grief, astonishment, &c.——¶ *Till thy people pass over.* That is, till the Israelites

17 Thou shalt bring them in, and [p] plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, *in* the place, O LORD, *which* thou hast made for thee to dwell in; *in* the [q] sanctuary, O LORD, *which* thy hands have established.

[p] Ps. 44. 2. & 80. 8.

[q] Ps 78. 54.

pass over the desert and the limits of the land of Canaan, and enter upon their inheritance. The Jordan, however, is probably more especially intended, as the spirit of prophecy pervades the poem. Thus the Chal. 'Until the people, O Lord, shall have passed over Arnon and the Jordan.' This was only a less miracle than the passage of the Red Sea, inasmuch as the channel is narrower, and the transit unattended by the destruction of enemies.——¶ *Which thou hast purchased.* Heb. קנית *kanitha, hast gotten, acquired, become possessed of.* The original signifies *to obtain* either by purchase, by generation, or by any other mode of acquisition, but more especially the former. Thus, Deut. 32. 6, 'Is not he thy father that hath *bought* thee?' Ps. 74. 2, 'Remember thy congregation which thou hast *purchased* of old;' and the Apostle, 2 Pet. 2. 1, speaks of such as 'deny the Lord that *bought* them.' Chal. 'Which thou hast redeemed.' Gr. ὃν ἐκτησω, *which thou hast possessed.*

17. *Thou shalt bring them in.* This glorious beginning of God's favor to them was of such a nature, as to afford an earnest of the full accomplishment of all his purposed mercy. If notwithstanding their unworthiness and all the difficulties that lay in the way of their escape, he had thus with a high hand *brought them out of Egypt*, might they not be assured that he would *bring them into Canaan?* For having so begun would he not make an end?——¶ *Plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance.* That is, thou shalt give them a settled and firmly fixed inheritance; a metaphor taken from trees which when their roots are struck deeply into the earth cannot without the greatest difficulty be plucked up. It predicts, therefore, a permanent and stable mode of life, in opposition to the roving and migratory habits of a people who are ever on the move. See the similitude beautifully expanded, Ps. 80. 8—16, no doubt in direct allusion to the expression of the present text; 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.' By the 'mountain of thine inheritance' is doubtless meant the mountainous country of Canaan, with, however, a more especial reference to Mount Zion, the site of the Temple. The term 'mountain' is plainly applied to the whole land of promise in the following passage: Deut. 3. 25, 'Let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, the *goodly mountain*, and Lebanon.' Comp. Ps. 78. 54, 'And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this *mountain*, which his right hand had purchased.' The three clauses rise in striking gradation, according to the genius of Hebrew poetry. First we have the *mountain*, or the land of Canaan generally; it is then restricted to *the place*, the particular spot, upon which the temple of the Lord's habitation was built; and lastly we have the *sanctuary* itself, the seat and centre of that economy which was so certainly to be 'established,' that it is spoken of as if already done.

18 [r] The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

19 For the [s] horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and [t] the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them: but the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea.

[r] Ps. 10. 16. & 29. 10. & 146. 10. Isai. 57. 15.
[s] ch. 14. 23. Prov. 21. 31. [t] ch. 14. 28, 29.

20 ¶ And Miriam [u] the prophetess, [x] the sister of Aaron, [y] took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, [z] with timbrels, and with dances.

[u] Judg. 4. 4. 1 Sam. 10 5. [x] Numb. 26. 59
[y] 1 Sam. 18. 6. [z] Judg. 11. 34. & 21. 21. 2 Sam 6. 16. Ps. 68. 11, 25. & 149. 3. & 150. 4.

18. *The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.* This sublime pean is here concluded with a burst of rapturous exultation in view of God's universal and everlasting dominion. Though they had seen an end of Pharaoh's reign, and were assured of the final extinction of those hostile powers with which they would yet have to contend, there was no period to be put to the ever-during reign of the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords. This appears to have been a sort of chorus in which all the people joined.

19. *For the horse of Pharaoh,* &c. This verse, if a part of the song, contains what the Greeks call the *epiphonema*, which includes the whole subject of the piece like the first chorus. It is obvious that it is a mere iteration in condensed terms of the general theme of the ode, such as might easily be retained in the memory of each individual, and by him transmitted along the line of his descendants to the latest posterity. But we decidedly prefer to adopt the opinion of Rosenmuller, who supposes that the triumphal hymn properly closes with v. 18, and that this is to be joined to the two succeeding verses as a brief recapitulation in simple prosaic narrative of the grand incident which gave occasion to the song.

20. *And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron.* Gr. Μαριαμ, *Mariam;* Lat. 'Marie;' Eng. 'Mary'—all the same name. She is called the sister of Aaron rather than of Aaron and Moses together, simply for brevity's sake, from Aaron's being her elder brother, and from her having lived with him in Egypt while Moses was absent in Midian. The character of 'prophetess' is ascribed to her probably from the fact that she in common with Moses and Aaron, and like Deborah, Huldah, and Anna, was made in some degree the organ of divine communications, as it is said, Mic. 6. 4, 'I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam,' where the three appear to be placed in co-ordinate rank. So also, Num. 12. 1, Aaron and Miriam are represented as saying together, 'Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by *us?*' It is supposed, however, by some to mean here no more than a woman eminently skilled in music, as it is plain that the word 'prophesy' is in several instances in the Scriptures employed to denote the act of singing or of playing upon musical instruments. Thus David, 1 Chron. 25. 1, set apart the sons of Asaph and others, 'Who should *prophesy* with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals.' The word 'prophesy' is also supposed to be used in the sense of singing the praises of God, 1 Cor. 11. 5, 'But every woman that prayeth or *prophesieth* with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head;' for that it cannot here signify to *communicate instruction* is to be inferred from 1 Cor. 14. 34, 'Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak.' Probably both senses are to be included in the term.——¶ *Took a timbrel.* Heb. תֹּף *toph*, from a root signifying *to strike, smite, beat.* The original word occurs about twenty times in the Heb. Bible,

21 And Miriam [a] answered them, [b] Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

[a] 1 Sam 18. 7. [b] ver. 1.

22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of [c] Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

[c] Gen. 16. 7. & 25. 18.

but our translators, with a disregard of uniformity which too often mars their version, have in about one half the cases rendered it by *timbrel*, and in the other by *tabret*, and in only one instance, Jer. 31. 4, does the margin present a choice of renderings. The instrument thus denominated is with great probability supposed to have been constructed of a hoop, sometimes furnished with pieces of brass to make a jingling noise, over which a membrane of parchment was stretched like the head of a drum; it was beat with the fingers, and answered very exactly to the tambourins of modern times. In allusion to this mode of playing upon the instrument, the prophet, Nah. 2. 7, compares women's beating upon their breasts in deep anguish to their 'tabering,' or playing upon the timbrel, where the epithet is to be understood not of 'doves,' but of 'maids,' in a preceding part of the verse. For a more particular account of this instrument see Note on Gen. 31. 27.—¶ *With dances.* Of the eastern mode of dancing Lady M. W. Montagu says; 'Their manner of dancing is certainly the same that Diana is said to have danced on the banks of the Eurotas. The great lady still leads the dance, and is followed by a troop of young girls, who imitate her steps, and if she sings, make up the chorus. The steps are varied according to the pleasure of her that leads the dance, but always in exact time.' Accordingly Miriam here led the dance, whose movements regulated the steps of her female associates. In like manner it is probable that David, 2 Sam. 6. 24, 25, when the ark was removed, danced not *alone* before the Lord, but led the dance in the same authoritative kind of way.

21. *Miriam answered them.* The whole song was probably, as suggested above, sung alternately by the men and women ranged into two bands, and by Miriam's 'answering' the men (for the original for 'them' is masculine) is meant, undoubtedly, that she was precentrix, or leader of the choir to the women, as Moses was to the men; or, as the words immediately following, 'Sing ye to the Lord, &c.' appear to indicate that which formed the 'answer of Miriam' and her companions, it is not unlikely that these words constituted a kind of chorus which was repeated at the end of each of the preceding verses, as in Ps. 136, the words, 'For his mercy endureth for ever,' are repeated throughout the whole psalm.

22. *So Moses brought Israel,* &c. From the opinion already expressed respecting the place where the Israelites encamped, and at which they entered the sea, it is evident that we regard Ain Mousa as the place, on the eastern shore, where they came up from the bed of the waters, and where they witnessed the overthrow of their oppressors. It is certain that the local traditions of the inhabitants of Sinai confirm this view of the subject; and although undue weight should not be attached to such traditions, yet neither should they be entirely disregarded when they support conclusions otherwise probable. Travellers who have explored the locality inform us, that a number of green shrubs, springing from numerous hillocks, mark the landward approach to this place. Here are also a number of neglected palm-trees, grown thick and bushy for want of pruning. The springs which here rise out of the

23 ¶ And when they came to
d Marah, they could not drink of
d Numb. 33. 8.
the waters of Marah; for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

ground in various places, and give name to the spot, are soon lost in the sands. The water is of a brackish quality, in consequence, probably of the springs being so near the sea; but it is nevertheless cool and refreshing, and in these waterless deserts affords a desirable resting-place. The view from this place, looking westward, is very beautiful, and it deserves to be mentioned that not only do the springs bear the name of Moses, but the projecting headland below them, towards the sea, bears the name of Ras Mousa, *Cape of Moses*. On the opposite shore of the Gulf stands in full view the *Cape of Deliverance*, the two uniting their abiding and unshaken testimony to the judgments and wonders of that memorable day. The 'wilderness of Sinai' is the name given to the desert extending from Canaan in a southern direction, and bordering upon the territories of Egypt. In Num. 33. 8, it is said that 'they passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.' By comparing the passage now quoted with Ex. 13. 20, it appears that the wilderness of Etham extended from the western side, quite round the northern point of the Red Sea, and to a considerable distance along its eastern shore, as it is evident that the Israelites on emerging from the sea entered into the same wilderness on the edge of which they had encamped before passing it. We imagine therefore that Junius and Tremellius have given the correct rendering of this verse; 'Then Moses ordered the Israelites to depart from the weedy (red) sea that they might go into the desert of Shur; and having gone three days through the desert (of Etham) they found water.' According to this version, the wilderness of Shur, instead of being the same with that of Etham, lay beyond it, and could only be reached by a previous three days' travel through it. It is said, that a clear trace of the ancient appellation still remains in the present name of *Sdur*. 'To this day there is nearly opposite the Bay of Bedea the bed of a winter torrent which is called *Wady Sdur*, and the coast to some distance northward also bears the name of *Sdur*. It is fair therefore to infer that the Hebrews emerged from the bed of the Gulf somewhere between *Wady Sdur* and *Ras Mousa*. Indeed, the necessary breadth of the opening made for their passage, would have obliged them to spread over a considerable part of the extent between the two points, which are distant about fifteen miles from each other.' *Pict. Hist. of Palestine*.

23. *And when they came to Marah they could not drink*, &c. Departing from Ain Mousa their road lay over a desert region, sandy, gravelly, and stony, by turns. On their right hand, their eyes rested on the deep blue waters of the gulf so recently sundered for their sake; while on their left was the mountain chain of El Ruhat, stretching away to a greater distance from the shore as the pilgrims advanced. In about nine miles they entered an extensive desert plain now called El Ati, white and painfully glaring to the eye. Proceeding beyond this, the ground becomes hilly, with sandhills near the coast. In all this way, which it took them three days to traverse, they found no water; but at last they came to a well, the waters of which were so bitter, that it bore the name of Marah, *bitterness*. At present, 'as we do not know that there were three complete days' journey, nor what distance made a day's journey for such a numerous and encumbered host, and

24 And the people [e] murmured against Moses saying, What shall we drink?

[e] ch 16. 2. & 17. 3.

25 And he [f] cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, [g] *which* when he had cast into the

[f] ch. 14. 10. & 17. 4. Ps. 50. 15. [g] See 2 Kings 2. 21. & 4. 41.

are also not quite assured of the point from which to begin the computation, we are allowed a considerable latitude in looking for Marah. Proceeding, then, along the coast south by east, over a plain alternately gravelly, stony, and sandy, we find the country begins to be hilly, with sand-hills near the coast, and at last come to the barren bed of a winter-torrent, called Wady *Amarah* (just the same in sound and meaning as *Marah*), a few miles south of which there is a well called Howara, which both Niebuhr and Burckhardt concur in considering to be the Marah of Scripture. It is true that these travellers agree in fixing the passage of the Red Sea at Suez, from which this spot is fifty miles distant, and forty miles from Ain Mousa. The distance from either point would be a good three-days' journey for such a body as the Hebrew host, nor would the distance be too short, if we suppose them to have started from some point between Ain Mousa and Wady Sdur. Even Dr. Shaw, who places the starting point at or below Wady Sdur, does not fix Marah more than a few miles below Howara. We may therefore consider the evidence for Howara as good as for any place that has yet been indicated. The well there lies among rocks, about a hundred paces out of the road, and its water is so bitter that men cannot drink it, and even camels, unless very thirsty, refuse to taste it. It occurs on the customary road along the coast from Suez to Sinai, and Burckhardt observes that there is no other well absolutely bitter on the whole coast so far as Ras Mohammed at the extremity of the peninsula. He adds: 'The complaints of the bitterness of the water by the children of Israel, who had been accustomed to the sweet water of the Nile, are such as may be daily heard from the Egyptian peasants and servants who travel in Arabia. Accustomed from their youth to the excellent water of the Nile, there is nothing they so much regret in countries distant from Egypt; nor is there any eastern people who feel so keenly the want of good water as the present natives of Egypt.' (Tour in the Peninsula of Mount Sinai.)' *Pict. Bib.*

24. *And the people murmured against Moses, saying*, &c. We here behold an affecting instance, not merely of Hebrew, but of human instability. How soon, alas! does the feeling of a little present distress convert the peans and hallelujahs of weak believers into sighs of murmuring and grief! All that Moses, all that God had done for Israel is forgotten, the moment a scarcity of water is felt! Strange that one unpalatable beverage at Marah should have obliterated all remembrance of the recent wonders of Egypt, and the still more recent miracles of the Red Sea! Did it require greater power to make the waters of Marah palatable, than to make those of the sea passable? But why should they murmur against Moses? Had he conducted them thither of his own motion without himself being led by the guiding movement of the cloudy pillar? Might he not therefore with the utmost propriety have remonstrated with them, as on a subsequent occasion, 'Your murmurings are not against me, but against the Lord.' Unreasonableness towards men cannot well fail to blend itself with impiety towards God.

25. *And he cried unto the Lord*, &c. The ingratitude of the people of his charge did not prevail to extinguish in the breast of Moses the spirit of fervent

waters, the waters were made sweet: there he [h] made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there [i] he proved them.

[h] See Josh. 24. 25.

[i] ch. 16. 4. Deut. 8. 2, 16. Judg. 2. 22 & 3. 1, 4. Ps. 66. 10. & 81. 7.

intercession in their behalf. By following his example the servants of God may be taught, like him, the means of turning bitter into sweet. —— ¶ *The Lord showed him a tree.* Heb. וַיּוֹרֵהוּ עֵץ *yorehu ĕtz, taught him a tree.* Gr. εδειξεν αυτω ξυλον, *showed him a wood.* It is clear that God by some special monition or suggestion indicated to Moses a peculiar kind of tree or wood, which when thrown into the fountain rendered the bitter waters sweet and fit for use. But it is not clear whether this was owing to some inherent curative properties in the tree itself, or whether its selection was entirely arbitrary, and the effect purely miraculous. On the one hand, unless we admit that it possessed some native efficacy this way, it is not easy to see why a particular kind of tree was pointed out to Moses, when *any* tree, or even his own rod, would have answered the purpose equally well. Again, there is no doubt that certain species of vegetable productions have this corrective property, and that they have been often employed for this purpose. A modern traveller in South America speaks of a shrub called *alumbre*, a branch of which put into the muddy stream of the Magdalena, precipitated the mud and earth, leaving the water sweet and clear. The first discoverers of the Floridas are said to have corrected the stagnant and fetid waters they found there, by infusing into it branches of sassafras; and it is understood that the first use of tea among the Chinese, was to correct the waters of their ponds and rivers. 'Since the publication of the first edition,' says Mr. Milman, in a note to his history of the Jews, 'some water from a fountain called that of Marah, but probably not the Howara of Burckhardt, has been brought to this country, and has been analyzed by a medical friend of the author. His statement is subjoined: 'The water has a slightly astringent bitterish taste. Chemical examination shows that these qualities are derived from the selenite or sulphate of lime which it holds in solution, and which is said to abound in the neighborhood. If, therefore, any vegetable substance containing oxalic acid (of which there are several instances) were thrown into it, the lime would speedily be precipitated, and the beverage rendered agreeable and wholesome.'' At the same time, however plausible this reasoning, it is certain that the tree had not *necessarily* any such virtue, for nothing is more common than for God to disguise the naked exhibition of supernatural power by the interposition of an *apparent* cause, while yet the true character of the event is obvious from the utter inadequacy of the ostensible cause to produce by itself the resulting effect. It may be remarked too that it is scarcely credible, that in the scanty and little diversified vegetation of this district, a tree of such virtues should have been hitherto undiscovered. But if it had been discovered, Moses would no doubt have been informed of it, and so the divine indication of the tree have been rendered needless. If the corrective qualities, moreover, were inherent, but were at this time first made known, it can scarcely be conceived that so valuable a discovery would ever have been forgotten or lost, and yet it is manifest that in after times the Hebrews had not the knowledge of any tree which could render bad water drinkable; and the inhabitants of the desert have not only not preserved the knowledge of any such fact, but they have not discovered it

26 And said, [k] If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his command-

[k] Deut. 7. 12, 15.

ments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these [l] diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD [m] that healeth thee.

[l] Deut 28. 27, 60. [m] ch. 23. 25. Ps. 41. 3, 4. & 103. 3. & 147. 3.

in the thirty-five centuries which have since elapsed. This is shown by the inquiries of travellers, some of whom were actuated by the wish of finding a plant which would supersede the miracle. Burckhardt confesses that after numerous inquiries, he never could learn that Arabs were acquainted with any plant or tree possessing such qualities; and on the whole, we cannot but conclude that whatever the tree was, it had no more *inherent* virtue in sweetening the bitter well of Marah, than the salt had which produced the same effect when thrown by Elisha into the well of Jericho. In this, as in many other similar cases, it is easier to understand and believe the miracle itself than the best explanations which have been given. It is remarkable that the Jewish writers generally are so far from recognizing any inherent virtues in the tree, that they on the contrary affirm that its quality was bitter, saying, 'It is the manner of the blessed holy God to make that which is bitter, sweet, by that which is bitter.' The Targums call it the bitter tree *Ardiphni*, supposed to be the Rhododaphne, or *rose-laurel*.——¶ *There he made for them a statute and an ordinance.* Heb. שם שם לו חק ומשפט *sham sam lo hok u-mishpot, there he appointed to him a statute and a judgment;* i. e. to the nation of Israel spoken of as one person. The original word חק *hok*, comes from a root חקק *hakak*, signifying to *describe, delineate, mark out, define* and properly implies a *definite decree, a prescribed rule, order, or course of action.* The statute or decree here intended is evidently that contained in the ensuing verse in which God, having now assumed his people into a peculiar relation to himself, and being about shortly to organize them under a more settled polity, here gives them a general intimation of the conditions on which they might expect to be dealt with during their sojourn in the wilderness, which he is pleased to denominate a 'statute.' We find the same or a similar phraseology occurring elsewhere on occasions on which the covenant obligations of the chosen people are, as it were, entered into and ratified anew. Thus, Josh. 24. 25, 'So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and *set them (him) a statute* (חק) *and an ordinance* in Shechem'; i. e. made known to them the conditions on which they might expect to enjoy the divine favor. So also in the second Psalm, the Son is represented as declaring or reciting the 'decree' (חק); i. e. announcing the terms or conditions on which he was to exercise the prerogatives of the King of Zion.——¶ *There he proved them.* Heb. נסהו *nissahu, proved, tried, tempted him;* the same word with that used in reference to the trial of Abraham, Gen. 22. 1, on which see Note. God now *proved* or *tried* the Israelites by bringing them into circumstances where their patience and faith would be put to the test.

26. *If thou wilt diligently hearken,* &c. These words contain a more full and distinct explanation of what was implied in the 'statute and ordinance' that he now appointed for them. They were now to be put in a special manner upon their good behavior, and informed both what God would expect from them and what they might expect from him.

27 ¶ [n] And they came to Elim, where *were* twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

[n] Numb. 33. 9.

They were not to suppose that because he had thus signally favored and honored them, he would connive at their sins and exempt them from merited punishment. On the contrary, they were to know that if they were rebellious and disobedient, the very same plagues which they had seen inflicted upon their enemies should be brought upon them, as it is again expressly threatened Deut. 28. 60, 'He will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of, and they shall cleave unto thee.' God is no respecter of persons, and they were to assure themselves that a rebellious Israelite would fare no better than a rebellious Egyptian. This declaration of God to his people, made under the present affecting circumstances, seems to have been regarded as so important that the prophet Jeremiah, a thousand years afterwards, referred to it to show, that from the very earliest period of Israel's covenant relation to God, their sacrifices had been held as of no account compared with obedience, Jer. 7. 22, 23, 'For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.' Nor is it less important for *us* at this day, to be assured that God will deal with us according as we demean ourselves towards to him. The retribution may not indeed be now so visibly marked by outward signals, but it will be no less real in secret visitations upon the spirit, in the conscious well or ill being of the inner man. And in many cases the frown or the smile of God will be evident in the dispensations of his providence.——¶ *I am the Lord that healeth thee.* Heb. יְהוָה רֹפְאֶךָ *Yehovah rophe'eka, Jehovah thy healer.* This word in scripture usage is applied to the soul as well as to the body, and implies the *forgiveness of sins.* Thus, Ps. 41. 4, 'Lord be merciful unto me and *heal* my soul, for I have sinned against thee.' So also where one Evangelist, Mat. 13. 15, has, 'Lest they should be converted and I should *heal* them,' another, Mark, 4. 12, has 'Lest they should be converted, and *their sins should be forgiven* them.' In like manner it will be perceived by reference to Mat. 9. 2—6, that Christ's *healing* and *forgiving sins,* in the case of the paralytic, are spoken of as nearly identical acts. Yet we cannot but think that there was still more in the incident and the language here recorded. We know that nothing was more common than for God to make outward actions and events a significant medium of conveying moral lessons. The present incident we regard of this character. God ordered in his providence that the Israelites should be brought to this bitter fountain, where an *occasion* should be afford d them of evincing and thus of learning the bitterness of their own hearts. And as he healed the waters by the miraculous exertion of his power, so he here tells them that he is the Lord who heals *them* also. He only can infuse a healing virtue into the embittered and empoisoned fountain of the human heart.

27. *They came to Elim where were,* &c. This spot is supposed, with sufficient probability, to be the same as that which now bears the name of Wady Gharendel, which is the largest of all the torrent-beds on the western side of the peninsula. It is about a mile broad, and extends away indefinitely to the north-east. This pleasant valley abounds in

CHAPTER XVI.

AND they [a] took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of [b] Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

[a] Numb. 33. 10, 11.

[b] Ezek. 30. 15.

date or palm-trees, tamarisks, and acacias of different species. But the springs are not at present immediately in the common route, though a small rivulet of brackish water runs through the valley, rendering it one of the principal stations on the route to Sinai. Burckhardt says of it, 'If we admit *Bir Howara* to be the Marah of Exodus, then *Wady Gharendel* is probably Elim, with its wells and its date-trees; an opinion entertained by Niebuhr. The non-existence at present of twelve wells at Gharendel, must not be considered as evidence against this conjecture; for Niebuhr says that his companions obtained water here by digging to a very small depth; and there was a great plenty of it when I passed. Water, in fact, is readily found by digging, in every fertile valley in Arabia, and wells are thus easily formed, which are quickly filled up by the sands.'——¶ *Three score and ten palm-trees.* Or 'date-trees,' as the fruit of the palm is called *date*. The presence of the palm in the arid regions of the East is an unerring sign of water. It is a tree which rises to a great height; the stalk is very strait, but knotty, and the centre, instead of being solid like the trunk of other trees, is filled with pith. The leaves are six or eight feet long, and when spread out, broad in proportion. It is crowned at the top with a large tuft of leaves which never fall off, but always continue in the same flourishing verdure. This tree attains its greatest vigor about thirty years after being planted, and continues in full vigor seventy years longer, bearing all this while every year about three or four hundred pounds weight of dates. This fruit grows below the leaves in clusters, and is of a sweet and agreeable taste. The palm is put to an immense variety of uses in the East, and is to the inhabitants of that region incomparably the most important and valuable production of all the vegetable world. It forms therefore a suitable emblem of the righteous in their flourishing condition, Ps. 92. 12—14, and the bearing of its branches is a badge of victory; Rev. 7. 9, 'After this, I beheld, and lo! a great number which no man could number... stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and *palms* (palm branches) in their hands,' &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. *And they took their journey from Elim,* &c. Upon comparing this account with that given Num. 10. 11, we find that previous to their reaching the wilderness of Sin, they came again upon the shore of the Red Sea, where, or at Elim, they must have abode for some time; for as it was thirty days after leaving Egypt before they arrived at the wilderness of Sin, and we have not more than ten days accounted for at the previous stage, twenty days remain to be distributed between the two or three last stations. But it is obvious from other parts of the history, that the writer does not specify every place where they encamped, but only the most important, or those in which some remarkable incident occurred.——¶ *Came to the wilderness of Sin.* Heb. אל מדבר סין *el midbar Sin.* No part of the history of the Israelites is more perplexing and obscure than that which relates to the topography of the places and stations mentioned on their route from

2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel [c] murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

[c] ch. 15. 24. Ps. 106. 25. 1 Cor. 10. 10.

3 And the children of Israel said

Egypt to Canaan. We cannot, at best, assure ourselves of any thing more than an approximation to the truth in most instances, and in many cases not even to that. As to the present passage, it is to be remarked that the Scriptures distinguish two *deserts of Sin*, one being written סִין *sin*, the other צִין *tzin*. The former is the one spoken of here, the latter in Deut. 32. 51. Num. 13. 21. —27. 14.—34. 3. Josh. 15. 3. Of the present we know little more than what is here said of it, that it lay between Elim and Sinai. What is implied in this may perhaps as probably be learned from the ensuing extract as from any other source. 'A chain of mountains called El Tyh stretches across the peninsula of Sinai, from the Gulf of Akaba, to near the coast of the Gulf of Suez. The common road, which we suppose the Israelites to have taken—and which they most obviously would take wherever they might have crossed between Suez and Birket Faroun—turns off from the shores of the gulf, south-east towards Sinai, after the extremity of these mountains towards the west has been rounded. We understand the desert of Sin to comprehend most of the space to be traversed between the point where the road turns off to within a few miles of Mount Serbal, which is the first of the larger mountains of the Sinai group. This is of course, from its situation, not a flat and uniform desert; but it is still a desolate wilderness, but more or less hilly and rocky, with valleys of various dimensions, but generally sandy or stony, strewed with the bones of camels, generally without plants or herbage, and also without water, except in the rainy season, when the valleys are traversed by the torrents that descend from the mountains. Burckhardt, who however says nothing about the identity of this region with the desert of Sin, relates that while traversing it from Sinai, his party met several Arabs, who had started in the morning from the well of Morkha, and had ventured on the journey without water, *or the hope of finding any* till the following day, when they would reach Wady Feiran. Now Morkha is near the gulf at one extremity of this desert region, and Wady Feiran near Mount Serbal at the other, the distance between the two points being about thirty miles; and we suppose this to have been nearly the route of the Israelites. We do not mean to say that the desert of Sin was limited to the district we mention; we only attempt to define its limits in the direction of the journey, at the same time not denying that the term might be applicable to all the country between the shore of the gulf on the west, and the Sinai group on the east.' *Pict. Bib.*

2. *And the whole congregation murmured*, &c. Individual exceptions it may be presumed there were, but the great body of the host are to be considered as having been justly liable to the charge. They had now subsisted thirty days upon the provisions brought out of Egypt, and it may well be supposed that their stock was nearly, if not altogether exhausted. Two millions of people, encamped in a barren desert, and beginning to find themselves short of food, would be very easily pervaded by a general alarm lest the horrors of famine should soon be upon them. To exercise faith in these circumstances in opposition to the dictates of sense, was doubtless no easy matter. Accordingly finding themselves reduced to straits, their impatient spirits again utter the language of murmuring against Moses and Aaron, whom they invidiously accuse, if not of an express design to

starve them in the wilderness, yet with bringing them into circumstances where they had every reason to fear that this would be the actual result. It is scarcely possible to conceive any thing more ungrateful or perverse. Indeed their conduct was marked by the double brand of *impious* and *absurd*. It was very culpable towards God. This was neither the first nor greatest extremity to which they had been reduced, and out of which they had been delivered. That which they had experienced at the Red Sea was much greater. There they had become acquainted with God as one who never suffers those that hope in him to be confounded. Why therefore do they not trust in him now? why not resignedly commit themselves to him? He had promised to conduct them to Canaan, and he will keep his word. If they do not know where to obtain food, neither did they know how to pass the Red Sea; and yet they did pass it. So they were bound to believe that on this occasion he would not fail to supply their wants—that 'bread should be given and water should sure.' Again, a moment's thought will show us that their deportment was now less absurd than wicked. What ground had they for ascribing such base intentions to Moses and Aaron? Had they any more to eat than the rest? and were not they as much in danger of perishing as themselves? One would think that reason, as well as gratitude, must have become extinct in men who could in these circumstances have preferred such a charge. Yet this is not all. The very people who had seen all the first-born of Egypt slain in one night on their account, now virtually wish that they had themselves perished in like manner. The very people that had sighed and cried by reason of their bondage in that country, now magnify its plenty, because they had sat by the flesh-pots and ate bread to the full! How strange to hear them speak as if it had been better to drag out a wretched, degraded life and die a miserable death in Egypt, provided they could have plenty of food, than to live under the guidance of the heavenly pillar in the wilderness, with God himself for their almoner, simply because they find themselves pinched a little with hunger, as they had before been with thirst! After all we cannot well doubt that in their present distress they paint their former comforts in altogether too glowing colors. What they call plenty now, they probably did not call so then; but it is easy to over-estimate the past when men are disposed to aggravate to themselves or others the hardships of their present lot. It heightens, moreover, our sense of their unreasonable and guilty conduct, when we consider that they were really in no danger of dying for want in the wilderness so long as they had their flocks and herds with them. But, alas! we recognise in this, as in other instances of their perverseness, but too faithful a picture of our fallen nature. How prone are we to fret and murmur under any present inconvenience! That which troubles us for the moment is the greatest of all troubles. Past dangers and deliverances, past supports and comforts, are all forgotten. Our minds dwell upon present evil, and our tempers are irritable, fretful, and impatient. We quarrel it may be, with our best friends, and murmur in spirit, though not perhaps with our lips, against God. Even those who profess to be the only the spiritual seed of Abraham, may adopt the language of his literal seed, Ps. 106. 6, 7, 13, 14, 'We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea. They soon forgat his works, they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

unto them, [d] Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, [e] when we sat by the flesh-pots, *and* when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

[d] Lam. 4. 9. [e] Numb. 11. 4, 5.

4 ¶ Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain [f] bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may [g] prove them whether they will walk in my law, or no.

[f] Ps. 78. 24, 25. & 105. 40. John 6. 31, 32. 1 Cor. 10. 3. [g] ch. 15. 25. Deut 8. 2, 16.

——¶ *This whole assembly.* Heb. את כל חקהל חזה *eth kol hakkahol hazzeh, this whole church,* as the term is usually rendered in the Greek. Comp. Acts, 7, 'This is he that was *in the church* in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him, &c.'

4. *Then said the Lord unto Moses,* &c. Although the murmuring was not directly but only indirectly against God, yet he at once takes up the cause as his own. Instead, however, of expressing the resentment of an insulted sovereign and benefactor, he utters the gracious purpose of overcoming their evil with good, and of pouring down blessings instead of wrath upon the murmuring host. Complaining is to be silenced by complying, and men, unworthy of the meanest earthly fare have the promise of a daily supply of bread from heaven! But this, though not the manner of men, is the manner of God. He has gifts even for the rebellious, and the unspeakable gift of salvation through his Son was imparted in manifest contrariety to our deserts. He hath commended his love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Though we have rendered to him only disobedience, guilt, and unthankfulness, yet how have they been repaid? Not by a visitation of vengeance, not by an award of judgment, but by raining upon us the bread of life from heaven! As to the grand design of this miraculous provision the remarks of Henry are strikingly appropriate. 'Man being made out of the earth his maker has wisely ordered him food out of the earth, Ps. 104. 14. But the people of Israel, typifying the church of the first-born that are written in heaven, and born from above, and being themselves under the conduct and government of heaven, receiving their charters, laws, and commissions from heaven, from heaven also received their food: their law being given by the disposition of angels, they did eat angels' food.' ——¶ *I will rain bread.* Heb. ממטיר לחם *mamtir lehem, I am raining bread, or food;* i. e. about to rain; the same phraseology that occurs in announcing the rain of the deluge, Gen. 6. 13, 17.——¶ *A certain rate every day.* Heb. דבר יום ביומו *debar yom beyomo, the matter of a day in his day;* i. e. they were to collect on each day the portion necessary for that day, but no more. They were not to collect to day what would not be required till to-morrow. It was but another form of enjoining upon them the Savior's rule, 'Take no thought for to-morrow what ye shall eat or drink.' God would school them to simple-hearted dependence on his daily providence.——¶ *That I may prove them whether,* &c. That is, that I may afford them an occasion of testifying whether they will trust me and walk by faith in the absence of all human means of supply, or not. This lesson, or 'law,' though hard to learn, is one that God would have deeply engraven upon the hearts of his children in all ages. A state of constant conscious dependence upon him is the state to which he aims to bring all his people. And this, could we realize it aright, is a far *happier* state than any

5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and [h] it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, [i] At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:

7 And in the morning, then ye shall see [k] the glory of the LORD: for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: And [l] what *are* we, that ye murmur against us?

[h] See ver. 22. Lev. 25. 21. [i] See ver. 12, 13. & ch. 6. 7. Numb. 16. 28, 29, 30.

[k] See ver. 10. Isai. 35. 2. & 40. 5. John 11. 4, 40. [l] Numb. 16. 11.

other. How unspeakably kind and condescending in the great Father of all to assume upon himself the care of our interests, and relieve our minds from the oppressive load of anxiety which we so often suffer to weigh upon them! Not that we are to deem ourselves exempted from the necessity of diligent exertion; not that we are to fold our hands in listless torpor, and call this an humble reliance on heaven; but having done what we can, we are not to be solicitous; we are not to give way to unbelieving fears lest we should not be provided for. Our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things. He will take care of his children, and let them not be surprised or stumbled if they should themselves painfully 'proved' on this score at more than one station of their wanderings in this wilderness world. The original term נסה *nasah, to tempt or try*, is the same as that applied elsewhere in similar connexions, and which is fully explained in the Note on Gen. 22. 1. The pronominal suffix, however, is not 'them,' as in our translation, but 'him,' representing the whole people as spoken of as one man.

5. *On the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in.* From this it appears that the manna gathered on the sixth day was not eaten in the form in which it was brought in. It was first bruised in a mortar, or ground in a mill, and then baked into bread. This process, whatever it was, was to be performed on the day before the sabbath, that both their hands and their minds might be unencumbered with domestic cares during the season of worship. Whether the same or a similar preparation of the manna was necessary on the other days of the week, it is not possible to determine. The probability, we think, is that it was not.

6. *At even, then shall ye know*, &c. The Israelites had charged Moses and Aaron with bringing them out of Egypt as if from their own motion. Moses, therefore, here assures them, on the other hand, that they should soon have evidence that it was Jehovah, and not his servants, who had brought them out of the land of bondage.

7. *In the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord.* That is, shall behold the cloudy pillar, the Shekinah, resplendent with a peculiar brightness and glory, as a signal of the Lord's special presence, both to hear your murmurings and to supply your wants. It appears that on several occasions the tumults of the people were assauged by some visible change in the ordinary appearance of the pillar of cloud, betokening, perhaps, by a fierce and vehement glow the kindling of the divine displeasure. See Num. 12. 5—14, 10—16, 42. Or the phrase 'glory of the Lord' may be but another expression for the miraculous work, the sending of the manna, which so strikingly manifested his glory. Thus, in like manner, in reference to the miraculous work of Christ in raising Lazarus from the dead it is said, John, 11. 40, 'Said I not unto thee

8 And Moses said, *This shall be* when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but [m] against the LORD.

9 ¶ And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, [n] Come near

[m] See 1 Sam. 8. 7. Luke 10. 16. Rom. 13. 2. [n] Numb. 16. 16.

that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see *the glory of God?*' i. e. the glorious work of God. So also Num. 14. 21, 22, 'glory' is used in a sense equivalent to *striking achievements of divine power;* 'But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my *glory*, and my miracles (or, *even* my miracles), &c., shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers.' The first is doubtless the most primary and legitimate sense, as appears from v. 10; and we cannot question, from the ordinary import of the glowing or burning pillar of cloud, that the spectacle now predicted was intended to intimate to them the fact of the divine displeasure, notwithstanding the purpose graciously to supply their wants. Thus the Jewish commentator Abrabanel; 'Their seeing the glory of the Lord is not to be understood of the bread, or the flesh he sent them, but of the fire which appeared to all the people to reprove them for their murmurings.'

8. *The Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat.* As God does not always withhold in displeasure, so he does not always grant in love. A promise of bread in the morning is precious information, but the addition of flesh to the full in the evening, and that very evening, wears rather the appearance of a threatening. When our desires exceed the bounds of wisdom they amount to lusts, and if God deigns to gratify our lusts it is very far from being a token for good. On the contrary, it is suspicious; it is ominous of a purpose to chastise us through the natural results of our own folly. —— ¶ *For that the Lord heareth,* &c. These words confirm the idea suggested above, that the language of rebuke and threatening is intermingled with that of favor. Otherwise how can we understand it as a reason for supplying their wants, that he had heard their murmurings? Such a reason demanded a punishment rather than a favor; and we can have no doubt that while God intended to bestow upon them, in his own way, the requisite means of subsistence, he intended at the same time to make such a display of himself as would chasten, humble, and shame his people in view of their sinful deportment. —— ¶ *Your murmurings are not against us.* Not so much against us as against the Lord. So 1 Sam. 8. 7, 'For they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me;' i. e. not so much thee as me. John, 12, 44, 'He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me;' i. e. not so much on me. Chal. 'Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Word of the Lord.'

9. *Come near before the Lord.* That is, before the cloud in which the Lord's glorious presence was manifested, and which for the present constituted the Shekinah or habitation of the divine Majesty. The symbols of God's presence are repeatedly in the Scriptures called by his name. Thus Uzzah is said, 1 Chron. 13. 10, to have died 'before God;' whereas in 2 Sam. 6. 7, it is said, 'He died by the ark of God.' So the commandment, Ex. 23. 17, 'Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God,' is to be understood of appearing before the tabernacle or temple, 'the place which the Lord did choose to put

before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.

10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD [o] appeared in the cloud.

11 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying.

12 [p] I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel; speak unto them, saying, [q] At even ye shall eat flesh, and [r] in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.

13 And it came to pass, that at even [s] the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning [t] the dew lay round about the host.

[o] ver. 7. ch. 13. 21. Numb. 16. 19. 1 Kings 8. 10, 11. [p] ver. 8. [q] ver. 6. [r] ver. 7. [s] Numb. 11. 31. Ps. 78. 27, 28. & 105. 40. [t] Numb. 11. 9.

his name there.' Deut. 12. 5, 6. Before this awful symbol they were now cited to appear, as before a tribunal.

10. *They looked toward the wilderness.* In the direction in which they were journeying, whither the cloud had probably moved in advance of the congregation.——¶ *The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.* Chal. 'The Glory of the Lord was revealed.' Arab. 'And lo, the Light of the Lord in the cloud.' That is, the Shekinah appeared in a new aspect. An unwonted glowing fiery brightness appeared in the guiding pillar, which on ordinary occasions presented to the eye merely an opaque towering mass of cloud, in which the divine Majesty was supposed to dwell, and did dwell. Its preternatural resplendent appearance was obviously a token of the displeasure of God towards his people. See Remarks above, p. 164—168.

11, 12. *The Lord spake unto Moses,* &c. These two verses are undoubtedly designed to acquaint us with the source and authority of the annunciation which Moses gave v. 6, 7, and therefore the verb 'spake' should be rendered in the pluperfect tense, 'had spoken.' This makes the narrative clear, and supersedes the necessity for which some commentators contend, of transposing these verses so as to bring them in immediately after v. 3.——¶ *At even.* Heb. בין הערבים *bin ha-arbayim, between the two evenings.* Gr. το προς εσπεραν, *towards evening;* i. e. in the afternoon. See Note on Ex. 12. 6.

13. *At even the quails came up.* Heb. תעל השלו *taal hasselav, the quail* (collect. sing.) *came up.* The 'quail' is a bird of the gallinaceous kind, somewhat resembling the partridge. Hasselquist, speaking of the larger species of quail, says, 'It is of the size of the turtle-dove. I have met with it in the wilderness of Palestine near the shores of the Dead Sea and the Jordan, between Jordan and Jericho, and in the deserts of Arabia Petræa. If the food of the Israelites was a bird, this is certainly it; being so common in the places through which they passed.' Some commentators have supposed that the original word שלו *salav,* denoted a species of *locust,* which is well known to have constituted anciently an article of food among the inhabitants of that region, and which is in fact eaten by the Arabs of the present day. But to this it is an insuperable objection, that the Psalmist, in describing this particular food of the Israelites, says, Ps. 78. 27, 'He rained *flesh* also upon them as dust, and *feathered fowls* like as the sand of the sea.' They 'came up' from the Arabian Gulf, across which they fly in the spring in great numbers, and are often so fatigued after their passage, and fly so low, as to become an easy prey wherever they alight. Wisd. 19. 12, 'For quails *came*

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* [u] a small round thing, *as* small as the hoar frost on the ground:

[u] Numb. 11. 7. Deut. 8. 3. Neh. 9. 15. Ps. 78. 24. & 105. 40.

15 And when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said one to another, It *is* manna: for they wist not what it *was*. And Moses said unto them, [x] This *is* the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

[x] John 6. 31, 49, 58. 1 Cor. 10. 3.

up unto them from the sea for their contentment.' Another miraculous supply of quails was granted to the Israelites about a year after this, of which we have a detailed account, Num. 11. 31—35. David probably alludes to both when he says, Ps. 105. 40, 'The people asked, and he brought *quails*, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven (the manna).' —— ¶ *The dew lay.* Heb. חרתה שכבת חטל *hayethah shikbath hattal, there was a laying (or layer) of dew.* Chal. 'There was a descent of dew.' Arab. 'There was a spreading of dew.'

14. *And when the dew that lay was gone up,* &c. Heb. ותעל שכבת חטל *vattaal shikbath hattal, and the layer of dew came up;* i. e. appeared on the surface of the earth, without any special reference to its originating in the air, and much less without intending to convey the idea of its evaporation into the atmosphere, as our translation has erroneously rendered it. The phrase in the original is precisely the same with that applied to the quails, v. 13, תעל חשלו *taal hasselav, the quail came up;* i. e. made its appearance. There is no good reason for rendering the particle ו *and* by 'when' as is done in our version. The true meaning of the clause must be determined by what is more explicitly affirmed of the phenomenon, Num. 11. 9, 'And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it;' from which it does not appear that the ordinary dew first vanished away before the manna was seen. On the contrary, the substance resembling the hoar-frost lay *upon* the dew. It was perhaps imbedded thus in the morning dew in order that a due degree of moisture might be imparted to it, and that it might be gathered clean and free from the dust or sand of the desert. It was made to fall 'upon the face of the wilderness,' or without the precincts of the camp, probably because the camp was not so clean a place for the purpose.— ¶ *A small round thing.* Heb. דק מחספס *dak mehuspos,* from the root דקק *dakak,* signifying *to beat small or fine, to comminute, to triturate;* and hence as an adjective *small, minute, atom-like.* It would seem to have been a fine powdered substance, like flour, and perhaps a pretty large mixture of dew was necessary to give it sufficient coherence to enable them to gather it. As to the connected word מחספס *mehusphos,* though rendered *round,* it is of extremely uncertain sense, occurring no where else but here, and derived from an unknown root. From a comparison of the cognate dialects Castell elicits the sense of *beat, pounded, pulverised;* Gesenius that of *decorticatum* or something *pealed off;* i. e. *scaly, flaky;* and Michaelis that of *snow-like,* which latter Rosenmuller very confidently adopts as the true sense, particularly as it is immediately after compared to the *hoar-frost.* But it is still a field of conjecture.

15. *They said one to another, It is manna; for they wist not what it was.* Heb. בן הוא *man-hu.* The rendering in our translation is manifestly incorrect and contradictory, and should be exchanged for that in the margin, 'What is this?' For how could the Israelites be ignorant what it was, if they at once declared it to be *manna?* Josephus

says expressly that 'man' is a particle of interrogation, and so the Septuagint understands it—τι εστι τουτο, *what is this?* It is but proper to remark here, however, that another, and perhaps on the whole a better derivation of the term itself is given by most of the Jewish and many Christian critics. This is to trace its etymology to מנה *manah, to prepare, appoint, determine, apportion,* whence by apocope of the last letter מן *man,* the same as מנה *manah, a part, a portion, a prepared allowance.* Thus we find the latter employed, 1 Sam. 1. 4. 5, 'And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, *portions* (מנות *manoth*). But unto Hannah he gave a worthy *portion* (מנה *manah*) for he loved Hannah; but the Lord had shut up her womb.' 1 Sam. 9. 23, 'And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the *portion* (מנה *manah*) which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.' Ps. 11. 6, 'This shall be the *portion* (מנת *menath*) of their cup.' That an abbreviation of the word from מנה *manah* to מן *man* should occur under the circumstances is very natural, as the next word begins with ה *h*, the very letter elided, and similar contractions in regard to the verb מנה *manah* are very common. Thus Ps. 61. 7, 'O *prepare* (מן *man*) mercy and truth for him.' Jonah, 1. 17, 'Now the Lord *had prepared* (ימן *yeman*) a great fish.' Dan. 1. 5, 'And the king *appointed* (ימן *yeman*) them a daily provision, &c.' As, therefore, both the form and the signification favor this etymology, there is, we conceive, little hazard in saying with the most learned of the Rabbins, that *man* signifies the food *appointed, prepared for,* and *doled out* to the children of Israel as their *portion.* Such a name was appropriate to this miraculous food, while there is something undignified, to say the least, in the idea that this supernatural aliment should always be called 'what,' simply because that, upon its first appearance, they said, 'what is it?' Although it is true that they did not distinctly know what it was when it appeared, and they had no particular name by which to express it, yet they had been assured by Moses, verse 12, that they should be satisfied with food, and they accordingly conjectured that what they saw was the *portion* intended for them from heaven, and applied to it the proper term for expressing that idea.—It can scarcely be necessary to inform the reader that attempts have been made to identify this manna with the natural juices or gums of certain trees or shrubs to which the name has been given. The strongest claim to identity applies to the substance called by the Arabs *mann,* of which the fullest account is given by Burckhardt (Tour in the Peninsula of Mount Sinai). Speaking of the Wady el Sheikh, to the north of Mount Serbal, he says, 'It is the only valley in the peninsula of Sinai where this tree grows, at present, in any great quantity; though small bushes of it are here and there met with in other parts. It is from the tarfa that the manna is obtained. This substance is called by the Bedouins *mann,* and accurately resembles the description of manna given in the Scriptures. In the month of June, it drops from the thorns of the tamarisk upon the fallen twigs, leaves, and thorns which always cover the ground beneath that tree in the natural state; the manna is collected before sunrise, when it is coagulated; but it dissolves as soon as the sun shines upon it. The Arabs clean away the leaves, dirt, etc., which adhere to it, boil it, strain it through a coarse piece of cloth, and put it in leathern skins: in this way they preserve it till the following year, and use it as they do honey, to pour over unleavened bread, or to dip their bread into. I could not learn that they ever made it into cakes or loaves. The manna is found only in years when copious

rains have fallen; sometimes it is not produced at all. I saw none of it among the Arabs, but I obtained a small piece of the last year's produce, in the convent (of Mount Sinai) where, having been kept in the cool shade and moderate temperature of that place, it had become quite solid, and formed a small cake; it became soft when kept some time in the hand; if placed in the sun for five minutes, it dissolved; but when restored to a cool place, it became solid again in a quarter of an hour. In the season at which the Arabs gather it, it never acquires that state of hardness which will allow of its being pounded, as the Israelites are said to have done, in Num. 11. 8. Its color is a dirty yellow, and the piece which I saw was still mixed with bits of tamarisk leaves; its taste is agreeable, somewhat aromatic, and as sweet as honey. If eaten in any considerable quantity, it is said to be slightly purgative. The quantity of manna collected at present, even in seasons when the most copious rains fall, is trifling, perhaps not amounting to more than five or six hundred pounds. It is entirely consumed among the Bedouins, who consider it the greatest dainty which their country affords. The harvest is usually in June, and lasts for about six weeks.'—'The notion, however, that any species of vegetable gum is the manna of the Scriptures, appears so totally irreconcilable with the Mosaic narrative, that, notwithstanding the learned names which may be cited in support of the conjecture, it cannot be safely admitted as any explanation of the miracle. It is expressly said, that the manna was rained from heaven; that when the dew appeared, it also appeared lying on the surface of the ground, 'a small, round thing, as small as the hoar-frost,' 'like coriander seed, and its color like a pearl;' that it fell but six days in the week, and that a double quantity fell on the sixth day; that what was gathered on the first five days became offensive and bred worms if kept above one day, while that which was gathered on the sixth day kept sweet for two days; that the people had never seen it before, which could not possibly be the case with either wild-honey or gum-arabic; that it was a substance which admitted of being ground in a handmill or pounded in a mortar, of being made into cakes and baked, and that it tasted like wafers made with honey; lastly, that it continued falling for the forty years that the Israelites abode in the wilderness, but ceased on their arriving at the borders of Canaan. To perpetuate the remembrance of the miracle, a pot of the manna was to be laid up by the side of the ark, which clearly indicates the extraordinary nature of the production. In no one respect does it correspond to the modern manna. The latter does not fall from heaven, it is not deposited with the dew, but exudes from the trees when punctured, and is to be found only in the particular spots where those trees abound; it could not, therefore, have supplied the Israelites with food in the more arid parts of the desert, where they most required it. The gums, moreover, flow only for about a month in the year; they neither admit of being ground, pounded, or baked; they do not breed worms; and they are not peculiar to the Arabian wilderness. Others have supposed the manna to have been a fat and thick honey-dew, and that this was the wild-honey which John the Baptist lived upon—a supposition worthy of being ranked with the monkish legend of St. John's bread, or the locust-tree, and equally showing an entire ignorance of the nature of the country. It requires the Israelites to have been constantly in the neighborhood of trees, in the midst of a wilderness often bare of all vegetation. Whatever the manna was, it was clearly a substitute for bread, and it is expressly called meat, or food. The abundant supply, the periodical suspen-

16 ¶ This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating: y an omer for every man *according to* the number of your persons, take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents.

17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

18 And when they did mete *it* with an omer, z he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating.

y ver. 36.

z 2 Cor. 8. 15.

sion of it, and the peculiarity attaching to the sixth day's supply, it must at all events be admitted, were preternatural facts, and facts not less extraordinary than that the substance also should be of an unknown and peculiar description. The credibility of the sacred narrative cannot receive the slightest addition of evidence from any attempt to explain the miracle by natural causes. That narrative would lead any plain reader to expect that the manna should no longer be found to exist, having ceased to fall upwards of 3,000 years. As to the fact that the Arabs give that name to the juice of the *tarfa*, the value of their authority may be estimated by the pulpit of Moses and the footstep of Mohammed's camel. The cause of Revelation has less to fear from the assaults of open infidels, than from such ill-judged attempts of skeptical philosophers, to square the sacred narrative by their notions of probability. The giving of the manna was either a miracle or a fable. The proposed explanation makes it a mixture of both. It admits the fact of a divine interposition, yet insinuates that Moses gives an incorrect or embellished account of it. It requires us to believe, that the scripture history is at once true and a complete misrepresentation, and that the golden vase of manna was designed to perpetuate the simple fact, that the Israelites lived for forty years upon gum-arabic! The miracle, as related by Moses, is surely more credible than the explanation.' *Modern Traveller.*

16. *According to his eating.* Heb. לפי אכלו *lephi oklo, according to the mouth of his eating;* i. e. as much as would be sufficient for his daily consumption. See Note on Ex. 12. 4.——¶ *An omer for every man.* Heb. עמר לגלגלת *omer laggulgoleth, an omer for an head;* the head being put for the whole person, as in Ex. 38. 26. An omer was about three quarts English measure.——¶ *According to the number of your persons.* Heb. מספר נפשתיכם *mispar naphshothekem, the number of your souls.* See Note on Gen. 12. 5.

17. *Gathered some more, some less.* Heb. לקטו המרבה והממעיט *yilketu hammarbeh ve-hammamit, they gathered, (both) he that multiplied and he that diminished;* correctly rendered, as to the sense, in our translation, 'some more, some less.' Paul, 2 Cor. 8. 13—15, thus alludes to this circumstance; 'For I mean not that other men be eased and ye burdened. But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their wants, that their abundance also may be a supply for your wants; that there may be equality: As it is written, He that hath gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack;' from which it is inferred by some that when any one had gathered more than his due share he gave the overplus to those who had gathered less. Others however suppose that the whole quantity gathered by any one family was first put into a common mass and then measured out to the several individuals composing the household.

19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

20 Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.

21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot it melted.

22 ¶ And it came to pass, *that* on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one *man:* and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

23 And he said unto them, This *is that* which the LORD hath said, To-morrow *is* [a] the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake *that* which ye will bake *to-day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

[a] Gen. 2. 3. ch. 20. 8. & 31. 15. & 35. 3. Lev. 23. 3.

19. *Let no man leave of it.* It is not implied by this that every man was imperiously commanded to eat at all events every particle which he gathered; but that if any portion of it was left, instead of being reserved for future use, it should be immediately thrown away.

20. *It bred worms.* Heb. וירם תולעים *va-yarum tolaim, wormed worms, or bred abundantly, or crawled with worms.*

22. *And it came to pass,* &c. If it be asked why this matter was brought to Moses, we know of no other answer than that the people were taken by surprise at the great quantity which they found that they had gathered. Finding upon measuring it, that upon the sixth day they had collected as much as two omers for a man, they had recourse to Moses to know what do to under the circumstances. His answer immediately follows. There is no reason that their surprise should surprise us, for although this fact of the fall of the double quantity of manna had been announced to Moses, v. 5, it does not appear that it had been previously declared to the people; or if the direction had been given to collect a double quantity on the sixth day, it does not appear that the *reason* of it had been declared.

23. *This is that which the Lord hath said.* That is, this double quantity on the sixth day is according to what the Lord hath said, v. 5, though, as before remarked, it had been said to Moses, and not to the people.——¶ *Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord.* Heb. שבתון שבת קדש ליהוה מחר, *shabbathon shabbath kodesh lahovah mahar, the sabbatism, the sabbath of holiness to the Lord, is to-morrow.* That is, the season of *rest* or *cessation*, appointed at the creation to be kept holy to the Lord, as explained on Gen. 2. 3. But as the Heb. שבת *shabbath* is retained by the Holy Spirit in the form of the Gr. σαββατον, *sabbaton*, Mat. 12. 5, 8, so the apostle in Heb. 4. 9, employs the corresponding שבתון *shabbathon*, here used in the form of the Gr. σαββατισμος *sabbatismos*, which is by interpretation *rest*. Although the law was not yet given, yet it is clear that the sabbath had been previously observed. He does not say 'To-morrow shall or will be, but, to-morrow *is* the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord.' The institution is recognised as one already existing, but its observance is now in a manner renewed and enjoined with more express particularity, perhaps from its having fallen into much neglect among the Israelites. The present was in fact a very suitable occasion to remind them of its obligation; for they would now have an opportunity to notice the *miraculous* seal of regard which God was pleased to put upon it. ——¶ *Bake that which ye will bake to day,* &c. That is, bake or boil to-day whatever you wish to have so dressed

24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not [b] stink, neither was there any worm therein.

25 And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day *is* a sabbath unto the LORD; to-day ye shall not find it in the field.

26 [c] Six days ye shall gather it;

[b] ver. 20. [c] ch 20. 9, 10.

but on the seventh day, *which is* the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, *that* there went out *some* of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

28 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long [d] refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

[d] 2 Kings 17. 14. Ps. 78. 10, 22. & 106. 13.

for to-morrow's provision. In like manner, the spirit of the Christian as well as of the Mosaic economy requires that no work shall be done on the sabbath, which can as well be done the day before.

24. *And they laid it up*, &c. The result was now found to be directly the reverse of what had been experienced in a former case; v. 20, when a portion of it had been kept contrary to the divine precept. That which was laid by *in opposition* to a command, putrified and stank, while that which was kept *in obedience* to a command, remained pure and sweet.

26. *In it there shall be none.* On that day it should not fall. They were, therefore not to expect it, nor go out to gather it. This intermission of the manna on the seventh day was an irrefragable proof that it was not produced by natural causes; and it would be a striking attestation to the sanctity which he had attached to that day. It is scarcely possible to avoid drawing the inference from this, that the attempt to procure for ourselves any advantage by doing on the holy sabbath the appropriate work of the week-time, will prove abortive. Every thing is beautiful, and we may add, prosperous, in its season, and only then.

27. *And it came to pass that there went out*, &c. There were probably some who were disposed to put Moses' words to the test, and ascertain from experiment whether his prediction would hold good. They were no doubt prompted by the same motives as those who would fain satisfy themselves whether the manna would corrupt by being kept over till the next morning, and accordingly laid by a portion for that purpose. There can be no question that this conduct in both cases was highly offensive to God, as it showed a practical distrust of his veracity.

28. *And the Lord said unto Moses*, &c. Moses himself was not disobedient, but he was the ruler of a disobedient people, and God charges the offence upon him with the rest, that he might the more warmly charge it upon them. The language would naturally have the effect to make him feel himself invested with a greater responsibility as to watching over the spirit and deportment of the people, whose collective person he sustained in his own.——¶ *Let no man go out of his place.* That is, out of the camp of Israel. It is not an absolute prohibition of all locomotion on the sabbath, as it was lawful to attend their holy convocations and their meetings in the synagogue, Lev. 23. 3. Acts, 15. 21. But they were especially interdicted on that day from going abroad in order to gather manna. The general rule adopted by the Jews in regard to travelling on the sabbath was, that the distance to be considered lawful should not extend beyond the suburbs of a city, which was ordinarily the space of two thousand cubits, or about three quarters of an English mile. Thus Mount Olivet was a sabbath-day's journey from Jerusalem, which is known to have been about a mile.

29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and [e] it *was* like coriander-seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

32 ¶ And Moses said, This *is* the thing which the LORD commandeth,

[e] Numb. 11. 7, 8.

Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.

33 And Moses said unto Aaron, [f] Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up [g] before the Testimony, to be kept.

[f] Hebr. 9. 4. [g] ch. 25. 16, 21. & 40. 20. Numb. 17. 10. Deut. 10. 5. 1 Kings 8. 9.

30. *So the people rested on the seventh day.* Not only on this particular sabbath, after being frustrated in seeking for manna, but also uniformly on the seventh day during the whole course of their sojourning. It is a virtual intimation of the restored regular observance and sanctification of the sabbath, which had previously no doubt, during the bondage, gone into desuetude.

31. *It was like coriander seed.* It resembled this seed in shape and size, but in color it is expressly said, Num. 11. 6, to have resembled the bdellium, which from this passage it is evident was white. When baked it is said, Num. 11. 8, to have had the taste of 'fresh oil.' But in its native state, when first collected, its taste is here intimated to have resembled that of honey-wafers.

32. *Fill an omer of it to be kept.* That the memory of signal mercies to one generation should be perpetuated for the benefit of another, is doubtless the principle on which this precept is founded. By a method which was in itself miraculous, God purposed that posterity should see the bread on which his people were sustained for forty years, and also how much was allotted for each man's portion. They would then be able to bear witness that their fathers were neither stinted to hard fare nor to a short allowance, and could thus judge between God and Israel, whether they had most reason to murmur or be grateful.—The idea that the manna was a mere natural production, is amply refuted by this injunction. For where was the necessity or propriety of preserving a specimen of that which nature continued to produce?

33. *Take a pot,* &c. The original word, which occurs no where else but here, signifying simply a *pot* or *urn*, is rendered by the Sept. 'golden pot,' and this rendering is adopted by the apostle, Heb. 9. 4.——¶ *Lay it up before the Lord.* That is, before the Ark of the Testimony, the symbol of the divine presence, as is clearly evinced in the ensuing verse. This Ark was not indeed yet constructed, but the history was written and perhaps the command given after it *was* made, and the fact is introduced here out of its natural order, because the sacred writer would now conclude all that he had to say respecting the manna.

34. *Aaron laid it before the Testimony.* That is, before the Ark of the Testimony, which in this connexion is evidently equivalent to 'before the Lord' in the preceding verse. It is here called the 'testimony,' instead of the 'ark of

35 And the children of Israel did eat manna [h] forty years, [i] until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

36 Now an omer *is* the tenth *part* of an ephah.

[h] Numb. 33. 38. Deut. 8. 2, 3. Neh. 9. 20, 21. John 6. 31, 49. [i] Josh. 5. 12. Neh. 9. 15.

CHAPTER XVII.

AND [a] all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and *there*

[a] ch. 16. 1. Numb. 33. 12, 14.

the testimony,' its usual appellation, by the same kind of ellipsis by which 'covenant' is used Gen. 17. 10, for the 'sign of the covenant.' See Note in. loc.

35. *The children of Israel did eat manna forty years.* Notwithstanding all their provocations, which were gross and often repeated, yet the manna, the grand staple of their subsistence, never failed. We know not on the whole but the manna is fairly entitled to be considered the greatest of the Old Testament miracles. It was not in fact one miracle, but an astonishing combination of many. It was a regular supply of food, a substitute for corn, during nearly forty years. It fell around the camp of the Israelites regularly, in all places and at all seasons, during all their removals. The supply, which was regularly intermitted once in every week, was compensated by a double supply the preceding day. It became unfit for use if kept to the next day, and yet, once a week, it might be kept for two days. And when the miracle was about to be discontinued, as no longer necessary, a pot full of it was directed to be laid aside, and preserved as a memorial to future generations. All these marvellous circumstances are not mere abstract qualities of the manna, but *historical facts*—facts inseparably interwoven with the history of the chosen people. It is surely then an attempt of no common hardihood, though it has been made, to endeavor to bring this sublime set of miracles within the limit of a natural probability. But, in truth, every effort made to explain away the miracle as related by Moses, actually requires one as great, or greater, to fill its place, and we are therefore content to take the matter as we find it in the scriptural narrative.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. *And all the congregation—journeyed—and pitched in Rephidim.* From the station in the wilderness of Sin, where the manna began to fall, the Israelites continued their journey over a sandy and stony region, intersected by the beds of numerous torrents, which are perfectly dry except in the seasons of rain, when some of them are filled with water to the depth of ten or twelve feet. Except at that season water is scarce; and by the usual and nearest route, which is generally supposed to be that taken by the Israelites, water occurs only at two places before reaching Wady Feiran. Upon comparing the present narrative with the fuller details given Num. 33, we find that two stations, viz. Dophkah and Alush, are entirely omitted here, which are mentioned there as resting-places between the desert of Sin and Rephidim. The first of these is probably the Wady Naszeb, still a favorite station for travellers on account of the combined advantages of a well of good water and the shelter of a large impending rock. 'Shady spots like this,' says Burckhardt, 'are well known to the Arabs; and as the scanty foliage of the acacia, the only tree in which these valleys abound, affords no shade, they take advantage of such rocks, and regulate their journey in such a way as to be

was no water for the people to drink.

2 [b] Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye [c] tempt the LORD?

[b] Numb. 20. 3, 4.

[c] Deut. 6. 16. Ps. 78. 18, 41. Isai. 7. 12. Matt. 4. 7. 1 Cor. 10. 9.

able to reach them at noon, there to take their siesta'—a circumstance which reminds one of the satisfaction with which 'the shadow of a great rock in a weary land' is mentioned by the prophet, Is. 32. 2. The other station may have been at Wady Boodra, where there is a spring of good water, though from its being somewhat aside from the common road, and often choked with sand, it has escaped the notice of most travellers. The next rest of the host was at Rephidim, where no water could be found. The determination of this station is important from its bearing upon an alleged locality of modern times, which is said to contain the identical rock smitten by Moses for the supply of water to the Israelites. There is, we think, the greatest reason to question the truth of this tradition, though very ancient; but to go fully into the argument would require a more extended detail of particulars relative to the topography of the entire Sinai region, than our limits will allow. We must therefore content ourselves with referring the reader to the able discussions of the Pictorial Bible on the subject. He will there find abundant reason to believe that the tradition which makes the rock of Rephidim to be among the higher summits of Sinai, and at the very foot of Mount St. Catherine, where there is plenty of water, to be altogether erroneous.——¶ *According to the commandment of the Lord.* Heb. עַל פִּי יְהוָה *al pi Yehovah, at the mouth of Jehovah.* They are said to have journeyed at the 'mouth' or 'commandment' of the Lord, because they followed the direction of the cloudy pillar, pausing when it paused, and moving when it moved. That this is to be understood by the phrase 'commandment of the Lord,' is evident from Num. 9. 18, 19. '*At the commandment of the Lord* (עַל פִּי יְהוָה) the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried along upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed.' Though journeying by the commandment, or under the express guidance of the Lord, yet they are conducted to a scene of extreme trial and distress; showing that the mere fact of our being in the way of our duty is no certain security against the occurrence of trouble. God may have wise though inscrutable reasons for bringing his pilgrims from Sin to Rephidim, from hunger to thirst.

2. *The people did chide with Moses.* Heb. וַיָּרֶב *va-yareb*, from the root רוּב *rub* which signifies *to strive, contend, litigate*, usually by reproachful words, though sometimes by deeds, as Gen. 49. 23. Ex. 21. 18. 1 Sam. 16. 5. In this case the impatience and irritation of their spirits vented itself in violent reproaches against Moses, and they challenge him to supply them with water, as if he had the command of springs and rivers and could summon them up at will, and produce effects in the desert to which Omnipotence alone is equal. As on a former occasion, they now also mur-

3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people [d] murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore *is* this *that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst.

[d] ch. 16. 2.

4 And Moses [e] cried unto the LORD saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to [f] stone me.

[e] ch. 14. 15. [f] 1 Sam. 30. 6. John 8. 59. & 10. 31.

mured against him for bringing them out of Egypt, as if, instead of delivering, he designed to slay them, their children, and cattle with thirst. Their rage and malice at length rose to such a pitch, that they were 'almost ready to stone him;' and yet we are to remember that they had been, a very short time before, supplied with food directly from the hand of God himself; they were feeding upon that food every day; and they were daily led by the miraculous pillar of cloud, which was a sensible token that the responsibility of their route rested not upon Moses, but upon God. Into such gross absurdities, as well as flagrant wrongs, do the fierce demands of appetite hurry sinful men, prompting them to act like madmen, casting about fire brands, arrows, and death, among their best friends. 'Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.' Yet in this complaining and murmuring multitude we see but an epitome of the race. Their conduct is but too faithful a picture of what large bodies of men are continually disposed to do, even to quarrel the most with those from whom they have received the greatest benefits, and to be ready to seek their death, as soon as they meet with the least disappointments of their desires. Thus it was in after ages with the divine Benefactor of the world. 'Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?' ——¶ *And Moses said unto them*, &c. Under these trying circumstances, Moses retains his characteristic calmness. He indeed reproves them; he shows them upon whom their murmurings reflected; but he does not denounce them; he does not meet rage with rage; but simply expostulates with them upon the unreasonableness of chiding *with him* for a privation which he had no hand in producing.——¶ *Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?* Why do ye tempt the Lord by distrusting his providential care and kindness, and by murmuring against his ministers? Why do ye act as if ye would *try him*, and see whether he will be provoked to come out in some severe judgment against you?

3. *To kill us and our children.* Heb. להמית אתי ואת בני *lehamith othi ve-eth banai, to kill me and my sons*; spoken of as one man. 'To kill' here is properly 'to make to die,' that is, to suffer to die; to bring into circumstances which would expose to death.

4. *And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying*, &c. The present was an emergency on which Moses might very properly adopt the Psalmist's motto, 'What time I am afraid I will trust in thee.' The torments of extreme thirst tend very much to work men up to desperation, and render their passions fierce and ungovernable. We cannot doubt that Moses was now in real peril of his life. But he had before this learned where his true refuge lay, and to that he betakes himself. He pours out his complaint to God as to a friend, a father, a guardian, a guide. He begs of him to direct him

5 And the LORD said unto Moses, [g] Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel: and thy rod, wherewith [h] thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

6 [i] Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And

[g] Ezek. 2. 6. [h] ch. 7. 20. Numb. 20. 8.

[i] Numb. 20. 10, 11. Ps. 78. 15, 20. & 105. 41. & 114. 8. 1 Cor. 10. 4.

how to act in this emergency, for he is himself utterly at a loss. This is the true import of his words, 'What shall I do unto this people?' They imply nothing vindictive; they are not a question touching the manner in which he should most effectually *punish* them, but simply regard the proper deportment for him to observe under the circumstances. How unspeakable the comfort of having such a sanctuary and such an oracle to flee to when our motives are suspected, our good, evil spoken of, our conduct reviled, and our patience tried! How favored is he whom the Lord hides in his pavilion from the strife of tongues!

5. *And the Lord said unto Moses*, &c. However much we have trembled for Moses in this extremity, we are prompted, on reading this verse, to tremble still more for those murmuring, unbelieving, rebellious Israelites. We hear the voice of God commanding his servant to take the ominous rod with which he had bruised and broken Egypt, and we anticipate that it is now to be an instrument of inflicting some fearful chastisement upon his guilty people. We can scarce repress an inward shudder in anticipation of the sequel. But how speedily are our apprehensions calmed? The rod is to be assumed for a purpose of mercy and not of wrath. It is to smite, not a sinful people, but a flinty rock. It is to draw forth, not a stream of blood from the heart of the offender, but a stream of water to cool his tongue, and to restore his fainting frame. How involuntary the exclamation, 'Surely, O Lord, thy ways are not as our ways, nor thy thoughts as our thoughts!'——

¶ *Go on before the people.* Go even in the midst of their rage, and before their thirst is relieved; fear not to advance boldly at the head of the host, and trust to my arm for protection.——¶ *Take with thee of the elders.* As if the mass of the people had rendered themselves unworthy of being the spectators of such a glorious miracle.——¶ *And thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river.* He does not say, 'the rod which was turned into a serpent,' or 'the rod with which thou didst work wonders,' but he makes special mention of the miracle wrought upon the waters of the Nile, because a somewhat similar one was now to be effected.

6. *Behold, I will stand before thee there.* That is, the cloudy pillar, the symbol of my presence, shall stand before thee there. Gr. 'I stand there before thou come to the rock.' It is implied that the cloud should go before, and stationing itself on the spot where the miracle was to be performed should await the arrival of Moses and the elders, just as the star pointed out the birth place of Christ.——¶ *Upon the rock in Horeb.* The arguments adduced above in relation to the true site of Rephidim, require that we should understand by 'Horeb' not so much a particular mountain as a mountainous district of considerable extent in which the Sinai group was situated.——¶ *Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.* The elders therefore were the only eye-witnesses of the miracle of the smiting of the rock, which was performed in a retired place, pointed out by the station of the cloud, whence the waters flowed in copious streams to the camp. The elders

Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

7 And he called the name of the place [k] Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

8 ¶ [1] Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

[k] Numb. 20. 13. Ps. 81. 7. & 95. 8. Hebr. 3. 8.

[1] Gen. 36. 12. Numb. 24. 20. Deut. 25. 17. 1 Sam. 15. 2.

would be able satisfactorily to testify that there was previously no spring or reservoir of water in the place, and that the present supply was produced solely by the mighty power of God. In regard to the apostle's allusion to this incident, 1 Cor. 10. 1—3, the reader is referred to Mr. Barnes' Note on that passage.

7. *He called the name of the place Massah and Meribah.* 'Massah' signifies *temptation*, and 'Meribah' *chiding*, or *strife*. The latter word is rendered in the Greek version by παραπικρασμος, *bitter contention*, which in the English translation, Heb. 3. 8, is rendered 'provocation;' 'Harden not your hearts as in the *provocation*, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.'——¶ *Saying, Is the Lord among us or not?* It is not perhaps to be understood that they uttered with their lips these precise words, but such was *the language of their conduct*. In like manner when our Savior says, Mat. 12. 37, 'By thy *words* thou shalt be justified, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned,' his meaning is, that they shall be judged by *actions* which have the force of language; actions which *express* the truth as clearly as *words* could do it. *Temptation* of God and *contention* with his servants, are very closely connected together; and no provocation does God more highly resent, than to have his gracious presence with his people called in question.

8. *Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel;* implying that they came from some distance for this purpose, and consequently that Israel was not at this time encroaching upon their territories, and thus giving occasion for the attack. Hitherto nothing has been said of the inhabitants of the Sinai peninsula; no clew accordingly has been furnished that might inform us how they were affected by the recent transactions, or with what feelings they regarded the advance of the vast Hebrew host into the finest part of the country. We now hear of them. It appears that not only the peninsula, but the adjoining deserts towards the south of Palestine, were occupied by an extensive and powerful tribe, of Bedouin habits, called Amalekites. The fine valley of Feiran was then doubtless, as now, the principal seat of those who occupied the peninsula; and indeed the Arabic historians preserve the tradition that the valley contained ancient towns and settlements of the Amalekites. There are some ruins of an old city which they say was *Faran* or *Paran*, and that it was founded by and belonged to the Amalekites; and they affirm that the numerous excavations in the mountains near, were the sepulchres of that people. (Makrizi in Burckhardt, p. 617.) *Feiran*, the name of this valley is undoubtedly the same as the *Paran* of the Scriptures, which we know is expressly applied to Mount Sinai, Deut. 33. 2. These Amalekites were the posterity of Esau, and were no doubt prompted in this assault by the hereditary hatred of that race which had become possessed of the birth-right and the blessing lost by their father. Their malice, which may be said to have run in the blood, was probably somewhat exasperated at this time by seeing the promises to Israel working towards an accomplishment. And they may have been aware, moreover, of the wealth, the spoils of Egypt, with which the

9 And Moses said unto [m] Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with [n] the rod of God in my hand.

10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill.

11 And it came to pass, when Moses [o] held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

[m] Called Jesus. Acts 7. 45. Hebr. 4. 8.
[n] ch. 4. 20.
[o] Jam. 5. 16.

Hebrews were now laden. But however this was, certain it is that we find not the slightest hint of any provocation given by the Israelites for the attack now wantonly made upon them, which it appears from Deut. 25. 18, was not conducted in a style of open and manly warfare, but in a mean and cowardly manner, by falling upon their rear, and smiting the faint and feeble who could neither make resistance, nor escape; 'Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.' The last clause is emphatically added, because such an invasion of the chosen people under these circumstances was a virtual defiance to that power which had so lately destroyed the Egyptians. This fact explains the deep resentment which God himself expresses on the occasion, and which, by a positive statute, he transmits to Israel. 'Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.' The same offence is accounted more or less heinous in the eyes of heaven according to the greater or less degrees of light against which it is committed.

9. *And Moses said unto Joshua.* Heb. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ *Yehoshua*, properly *Savior*, from the root יָשַׁע *yasha*, *to save*. Gr. Ἰησους, *Jesus*, by which name Joshua is twice called in the New Testament, viz. Acts, 7. 45. Heb. 4. 8. In Num. 13. 9, he is called 'Oshea.' The name of this distinguished personage in the sacred story here occurs for the first time, but his courage and discretion had before this become known to Moses, and he does not hesitate, under divine suggestion, to confide to him the conduct of this first military action. Whether Moses in this had an eye to his future station, and designed to afford him an opportunity for that preliminary training which his destined services would require, we know not; but we may safely say that God had such an end in view, and accordingly now entered him upon that course of action which should best qualify him for the arduous duties of his subsequent leadership of Israel. He was now ordered to draw out a detachment of the choicest spirits from the many thousands of Israel, and with them to give battle on the morrow to the Amalekites.——¶ *And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.* Of the Hur here mentioned we only know from 1 Chron. 2. 18, that he was the son of Caleb, the son of Hezron, the son of Pharez, the son of Judah. But whether this Caleb was the same with the faithful spy of that name, is more than can be positively determined. These then went to the summit of the hill, but for a different purpose than merely that of being idle spectators of the coming contest, as appears from the next verse.

11. *It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand*, &c. It is not here expressly affirmed that Moses held any thing

in his hand, but as it is clear from v. 9, that he took 'the rod of God' with him, there can be no doubt that this was to be held up as a kind of banner or signal to be seen by the warring host below, and to operate as a continual incentive to their valor and prowess, while engaged in the contest. The sight of that wonder-working wand, which had already wrought such glorious things for them, which had summoned the plagues of Egypt, which had opened a path through the trackless waters, and which had so recently smitten the rock for their refreshment, could not fail to nerve their arms with new vigor every time their eye was turned towards it. Yet a moment's reflection would convince them, as it will us, that there was no intrinsic virtue in the rod to produce this effect; that it derived all its efficacy from the divine appointment, from its being a visible symbol of that unseen succor and strength which God was pleased to minister to his militant servants fighting his own battle and maintaining his glory. But it was evidently proper that, in order to secure the divine cooperation on such an occasion, fervent prayer should be united with external appliances; and accordingly we have every reason to believe that the uplifted rod was merely an accompaniment of the earnest intercessions which breathed from the lips and hearts of the venerable trio convened on the summit of the hill. Such also is the view taken of the incident by the Chal. and Jerus. Targums; 'When Moses held up his hands in prayer, the house of Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hands from prayer, the house of Amelek prevailed.' We have here then grouped together that hallowed combination of agencies which ought never to be separated, and in which safety and success are ever to be found; viz. the acknowledgment of heaven and the use of appointed means. The rod in the hand of Moses, and the sword in that of Joshua; the embattled host in the valley below, and the praying band on the mount above, all were necessary in the divine economy to the grand result. In vain had Moses prayed if Joshua had not fought; in vain had Joshua fought if Moses had not prayed. The whole narrative, however, conclusively shows, that God designed to teach Israel that the hand of Moses, with whom they had just been chiding, contributed more to their safety than their own hands; his rod more than their weapons; and accordingly the success fluctuates as he lifts up or lets down his hands. What can more strikingly illustrate the principle, that the triumphs of the church depend upon the prayers of its friends? Accordingly as they are more or less strong in faith and fervent in supplication, the victory wavers to their side or that of their enemies. And the same holds true of the individual. The lesson here intended to be taught is 'that men ought always to pray and not to faint;' it is, 'that men should pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting.' The Christian warfare will be attended with but little success, unless it be waged in the spirit and practice of unceasing, earnest prayer. And in this struggle let us be cheered by the consideration that we do not engage in this holy war unassisted and alone. The faithful servants of God, our brethren, have ascended the hill of spiritual prayer, and are imploring blessings upon our efforts. And not only so; he who marshals the ranks of the sacramental host, who leads them on to battle, and fights in their behalf, sustains another office equally important. He has gone up to the summit of the everlasting hills, and is there employed in prevalent intercessions for their success. A greater than Moses is mediating for them on the mount above, and *his* hands never grow heavy and weary, and faint. Of him it can never be said, that though the spirit is

12 But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon: and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, p Write this *for* a memorial in a book, and rehearse *it* in the ears of Joshua: for q I will utterly put

p ch. 34. 27. q Numb. 24. 20. Deut. 25. 19. 1 Sam. 15. 3, 7. & 30. 1, 17. 2 Sam. 8. 12. Ezra 9. 14.

willing, the flesh is weak. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us'—liveth in the spiritual undecaying vitality of his love, and the vigor of his advocacy for his people.

12. *Moses' hands were heavy.* That is, felt heavy to him, were wearied by being kept so long in the same uplifted posture. The infirmity of nature prevailed over the promptings of piety. In this emergency recourse is had to artificial supports. A stone is put under him for a seat, and Aaron and Hur become living stays for his arms. In performing this office, however, we do not suppose that both his hands were held up on either side at the same time; for in this case we cannot see but the arms of Aaron and Hur would eventually become as weary, and as much need support as those of Moses. The main object of holding up his arms was that the rod might be held up. This he no doubt shifted from time to time from one hand to the other, and Aaron and Hur each of them successively aided in holding that hand which was next to them, and thus relieved both him and each other. In our native feebleness and proneness to languish under the pressure of spiritual duties, recourse may be innocently had to adventitious aids in keeping alive the spirit of devotion.——¶ *Were steady until the going down of the sun.* Heb. אמונה *amunah, steadiness.* Even though thus supported, yet so long a continuance in one fixed posture must have been a severe trial to his patience, and it impressively shows us to what a test our pious perseverance may sometimes be brought. Of the occasions our consciences must judge, but there can be no doubt that circumstances do sometimes occur in Christian experience that call upon us for services equally trying to the flesh; occasions when we should be unfaithful to our own souls did we not hold out in prayer and inward groanings far beyond the point where nature would plead for respite and repose.

13. *And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people.* That is, the Amalekites and the people of other clans which had confederated with them in this assault. Junius and Tremellius, however, make the latter clause exegetical of the former; 'discomfited Amalek, *even* his people.'

14. *Write this for a memorial in a book,* &c. The memorandum or memorial which Moses was commanded to write, was undoubtedly the very words contained in the final clause of the verse, and therefore the Hebrew term translated 'for' should be rendered 'that;' 'Write and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua *that* I will utterly put out,' &c. ——¶ *Rehearse it in the ears of Joshua.* This record was especially to be impressed, and, as it were, engraven, upon the memory of Joshua, inasmuch as he was the destined successor of Moses, as head of the chosen people, and it was all important for him to be informed what particular tribes or nations they were with whom the Israelites were not to make any treaties, but rather to devote to utter extermination. It would serve also as a very season-

out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-nissi:

16 For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn *that* the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation.

able pledge and assurance that he should be victorious in the career of his future wars against the enemies of God's people.——¶ *I will utterly put out the remembrance*, &c. Heb. מחה אמחה *mahoh emheh, wiping I will wipe out.* The denunciation is awfully emphatic. It declares that in process of time Amalek should be totally ruined and rooted out, that he should be remembered only in history. This was but meting out to them the measure of destruction which they themselves had meditated against Israel. Their language was that reported by the Psalmist, Ps. 83. 4, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.' God therefore determines not only to disappoint them in that, but to cut off *their* name. It was to be known for the encouragement of Israel, whenever the Amalekites should be an annoyance to them, that sentence had irrevocably gone forth against them; they were a doomed people; and the chosen race should not fail at last to triumph over them. This sentence was executed in part by Saul, 1 Sam. 15, and completely by David, 1 Sam. 30. 2 Sam. 1. 1.—8. 12, after which we never read so much as the name of Amalek. Thus are the cunning taken in their own craftiness, and thus are designs of violence and blood turned back upon the heads of their contrivers.

15. *Called the name of it Jehovah-nissi.* Heb. יהוה נסי *Yehovah nissi, the Lord my banner.* This was a grateful acknowledgment to him to whom the glory of the recent victory was due. Instead of rearing a monument in honor of Joshua or his brave associates, an altar for sacrificial and thank-offerings is erected to God, of which the most important item was the inscription, or rather, the appellation, by which it was to be known. The original term נס *nës*, signifying primarily *lifting up, exaltation*, is applied also to a *banner* or *ensign*, such as were usually lifted up conspicuously in a field of battle as a rallying-point to the assembled hosts. In bestowing the name 'Jehovah-nissi' upon the altar, there is no doubt an allusion to the lifting up of the rod of God as a *banner* or *standard* in this action. The victory was achieved, not by their own prowess, but by the power of Jehovah accompanying this uplifted banner, and therefore in commemorating the result of the conflict it was proper that they should recognise the agency of the Most High evinced in their behalf through his appointed symbol. It was, in fact, virtually adopting the language of Israel in the Psalms, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but unto thy name, give the glory.' 'We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God will we *set up our banners.*'

16. *Because the Lord hath sworn*, &c. Heb. Because the hand על כס יה *al kës Yah, upon the throne Yah.* Very considerable doubt hangs over the true interpretation of this clause. It may be referred by the construction either to the hand of Amalek, or to the hand of the Lord. In the former case, the import is; 'Because the hand of Amalek is upon (or against) the throne of heaven, therefore the Lord will have war,' &c. In the latter, the Lord's hand being upon the throne is equivalent to the taking an oath declarative of a purpose of irrevocable hostility toward Amalek in all generations. If we adopt the former as the true sense,

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN [a] Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law,

[a] ch. 2. 16. & 3. 1

the implication is, that the attack made by the Amalekites upon the Israelites while they were under the tutelary conduct of the cloudy pillar, was a virtual assault upon that sacred symbol itself, which they were taught to regard as the seat, throne, or dwelling-place of Jehovah. This is by no means an improbable interpretation, although it is certain that the older versions incline rather in favor of the other. Thus, Chal. 'With an oath this is spoken from the face of the terrible (one), whose majesty is upon the throne of glory; that it shall come to pass that war shall be waged from the face of the Lord against the men of the house of Amalek; that he may consume them from the generations of the world.' Arab. 'Now have I cause to swear by the throne, that the Lord shall have war against the Amalekites, &c.' Syr. 'Lo, the hand upon the throne, the war of the Lord with Amalek.' This idea is still more explicitly enounced in the old rabbinical work, Pirke Eliezer, c. 44, 'When God would root out and destroy all Amalek's seed, he stretched forth his right hand, and took hold on the throne of his glory, and sware to root out and destroy all Amalek's seed out of this world and out of the world to come.' The Greek renders as if the reading of their text was different from what it is at present; 'And Moses built an altar to the Lord, and called the name of it, The Lord my refuge; because with a hidden hand (secretly) the Lord will war against Amalek from generation to generation.' Vulg. 'Because the hand upon the throne of the Lord, and the war of the Lord, shall be against Amalek.' It would seem, perhaps, that some of these renderings must yield the true sense, and yet we are not entirely satisfied with any of them. As it is clear that the lifting up of the rod in the hand of Moses was the prominent incident in the whole transaction, it is certainly natural to look for some allusion to that in the words of the present record. We would suggest then, with deference, whether the *hand of Moses* is not the hand intended in the passage. Because his hand was upon, or *towards*, as the original עַל *al* will admit, the heavens, or perhaps the cloudy pillar, which may have been near, and was perseveringly sustained in that direction, therefore the Lord assumes this contest as his own, and declares perpetual war against the devoted race who have ventured to provoke his hostility.' How far the proposed construction goes to free the passage from obscurity must be left to the judgment of the reader.

heard of all that [b] God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people,

[b] Ps. 44. 1. & 77. 14, 15. & 78. 4. & 105. 5, 43. & 106. 2, 8.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. *When Jethro, the priest of Midian*, &c. Lightfoot, in accordance with Aben Ezra and Jarchi, is of opinion that this account of Jethro's visit to Moses is inserted out of its chronological order, which would require its collocation between the tenth and eleventh verses of the tenth chapter of Numbers. That it does not properly pertain to this part of the narrative, he argues, (1.) From the fact mentioned verse 12, that 'Jethro took burnt-offerings and sacrifices for God,' whereas the law respecting these offerings was not yet given. (2.) From that mentioned in v. 13. 16, that 'Moses sat to judge the people, and made them know the statutes of God and his law,' whereas these statutes and laws not having yet been promulgated, Moses himself could not know them. (3.) It appears from Deut. 1. 9—15, that the judges and rulers here mentioned, were

and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt:

2 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, [c] after he had sent her back,

3 And her [d] two sons; of which the [e] name of the one *was* Gershom; (for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land:)

[c] ch. 4. 26. [d] Acts 7. 29. [e] ch. 2. 22.

4 And the name of the other *was* Eliezer; (for the God of my father, *said he*, *was* mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:)

5 And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at [f] the mount of God:

f ch. 3. 1, 12.

not appointed till after the departure from Sinai, and yet at this time they had not arrived at Sinai. The inference, therefore, plainly is, that this incident is transposed from its natural place in the order of the sacred story. The reason of the present arrangement, Lightfoot says, is to be sought for in the prophetic curse denounced against the Amalekites in the close of the preceding chapter; for as Jethro and his family were residing in the country of this devoted people, it was proper to afford the reader an intimation that he was not to be involved in their doom, and accordingly the incident of his visit to the camp of Israel, and his joining in the worship of the true God, is introduced in immediate connection with the mention of the curse; not that it actually occurred at that precise time, but to show that he once came, and evinced by his conduct that he was exempted from the denunciation. This view of the subject we consider on the whole the correct one. In regard to Jethro and his true relation to Moses, see Note on Ex. 2. 18.

2. *Then Jethro took*, &c. Neither time nor distance had alienated his affection for the husband of his daughter, of which he gives decisive evidence in undertaking the present journey. He does not satisfy himself with sending by the mouth of another his congratulations to his son-in-law, neither will he permit Zipporah and her sons to go unaccompanied, unprotected through the wilderness, but aged and infirm as he is, choses himself to be their attendant and guardian. He had undoubtedly heard the report of the great and glorious things which had been wrought for the deliverance of Israel, and though as a Midianite he was not to share with them in the promised land, yet as a descendant of Abraham and a worshipper of Israel's God, he feels a deep interest in their welfare, and sympathises with them in the joy of their deliverance ——¶ *After he had sent her back.* That is, from the inn or lodging-place mentioned, Ex. 4. 26, where Moses' life had been endangered in the manner and for the reasons thus explained. He no doubt foresaw that the presence of his wife and children would be a hindrance instead of a help in the prosecution of his mission to Pharaoh.

3. *The name of the one was Gershom.* That is, *stranger there*; alluding thereby not only to his own condition at the time, but designing it as a memorial also to his son of *his* condition, as a stranger and pilgrim on earth, as all his fathers were.

4. *The name of the other was Eliezer.* That is, *my God a help*, as immediately after explained.——¶ *Delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.* The obvious deduction from this mode of rendering is, that this deliverance from the sword of Pharaoh is no other than his escape from the royal vengeance after slaying the Egyptian. But in this case it would have been more natural, while that event was fresh upon his mind, to bestow such a commemorative name upon the

6 And he said unto Moses, I thy father-in-law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

7 ¶ And Moses [g] went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and [h] kissed him: and they asked each other of *their* welfare; and they came into the tent.

8 And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, *and* all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and *how* the LORD [i] delivered them.

[g] Gen. 14. 17. & 18. 2. & 19. 1. 1 Kings 2. 19. [h] Gen. 29. 13. & 33. 4.

[i] Ps. 78. 42. & 81. 7. & 106. 10. & 107. 2.

first born, rather than upon the *second;* and as the original will as well, if not better, admit of it, we prefer to render the verb in the future, 'The Lord is mine help and *will deliver* me from the sword of Pharaoh,' which he had reason to expect would be drawn against him in his attempt to bring Israel out of bondage. It is a name which is at once indicative of Moses' grateful acknowledgment of God's past mercies and of his faith in his future kindness. In this case, the child thus named was probably not the one which was circumcised by his mother at the place above mentioned.

6. *And he said unto Moses.* Not personally, but by messengers despatched before him to acquaint Moses with his coming. Thus in like manner by comparing Mat. 8. 5—8, with Luke 7. 3—6, it appears that what the centurion is represented as saying to Jesus, was said to him by certain persons whom he had sent for the purpose. Accordingly the Gr. version of the present passage reads thus: 'And it was told Moses, saying, Lo, Jethro thy father-in-law cometh.' Vulg. 'He sent word to Moses.'

7. *Moses went out to meet his father-in-law.* The acquaintance which we have already formed with Moses assures us before hand of the reception with which he would greet his honored relative. Our anticipations are realized. Though a prophet and a judge in Israel, he does not forget the duties that grow out of his relations as a man. Instead of waiting in state till his visitors are admitted to pay their homage to the 'king in Jeshurun,' he goes forth with alacrity to meet them, and after the usual significant tokens of respect, to conduct them into his tent. However highly the providence of God may have advanced us in rank or authority, yet we are bound to give honor to whom honor is due, and never to look with disdain upon our kinsmen or others in an humbler sphere of life. No dignities conferred by God can exempt us from entertaining the sentiments or evincing the signs of natural affection.——¶ *They asked each other of their welfare.* Literally, 'they asked a man his neighbor of peace.' Of this phraseology see Note on Gen. 29. 6.—37. 5. 'Even the kind 'How-do-you's' that pass between them are taken notice of, as the expressions and improvements of mutual love and friendship.' *Henry.*

8. *Moses told his father all,* &c. The separation of near and dear friends even for a few days or weeks naturally calls up a thousand little topics of interest when they meet. What then must it have been for two such friends, such a father and such a son, to meet after an interval of many months, during which events of such stupendous character had occurred?—events supremely interesting to them, and destined to live in the memory of all coming generations. Were ever two individuals furnished with such a subject of conversation? If the most trifling incidents that befall a brother, a friend, a parent, a child, are full of interest to the parties concerned,

9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

10 And Jethro said, [k] Blessed *be* the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

11 Now I know that the LORD *is* [l] greater than all gods: [m] for in the thing wherein they dealt [n] proudly, *he was* above them.

[k] Gen. 14. 20. 2 Sam. 18. 28. Luke 1. 68.

[l] 2 Chron. 2. 5. Ps. 95. 3. & 97. 9. & 135. 5.
[m] ch. 1. 10, 16, 22. & 5. 2, 7. & 14. 8, 18.
[n] 1 Sam. 2. 3. Neh. 9. 10, 16, 29. Job. 40. 11, 12. Ps. 31. 23. & 119. 21. Luke 1. 51.

what must have been the emotions of Jethro in listening to the wondrous narrative of Moses? Yet it was for this object, among others, that he came. He wished to learn more fully and particularly the events of which he had heard in a general and indefinite report; and in this conversation we may see a specimen of those themes which are most grateful to a gracious heart. They are well characterised by the Psalmist, Ps. 145, 5—12, 'I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.'——¶ *All the travail that had come upon them.* Heb. אשר מצאתם *asher metzatham, which had found them.* For this sense of the original word, viz., *the happening of afflictions* to any one, see Note on Gen. 44. 34.

9.—10. *And Jethro rejoiced,* &c. The emotions excited in Jethro's breast by the narrative of Moses, soon rose above all personal or selfish regards, above the partiality of private friendship, above the tenderness of natural affection. His heart expands at the thought of the wonders wrought by the divine interposition in behalf of Israel. Though a Midianite, yet he is conscious of joy unfeigned in view of the goodness shown to a foreign people, while many of the Israelites themselves were murmuring under the sense of their privations and hardships. His joyful emotions, however, are not blind to the true source of the blessings which prompt them. He gives the glory to God, and not to Moses or to Israel. He who is the originating fountain of all good to his people is the ultimate object of their joy and their praise. We cannot without treachery to his glory and black ingratitude to his goodness stop short of him in our ascriptions.

11. *In the thing wherein they dealt proudly,* &c. Heb. בדבר אשר זדו עליהם *baddabar asher zadu alēhem, in the thing in which they (the Egyptians) dealt proudly towards or against them (the Israelites),* he was still too strong for them; this last clause or something similar being necessary to supply the ellipsis. Compare Neh. 9. 10, which has a reference to this passage. Chal. 'In the thing wherein the Egyptians thought to judge Israel, in that they are judged.' The pronoun 'they' in the original is somewhat indefinite in construction, and may be supposed to include largely not only all the Egyptian princes and potentates, but also the magicians, the courtiers, and the common people. In spite of all their efforts and machinations, they were baffled, subdued, humbled, and Israel triumphantly rescued from their grasp. In like manner will he sooner or later show himself above every thing that opposes him or sets itself up in competition with him.

12 And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law o before God.

13 ¶ And it came to pass on the

o Deut. 12. 7. 1 Chron. 29. 22. 1 Cor. 10. 18, 21, 31.

12. *Took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God.* The friendly interview issues in a solemn religious service, in which Aaron and all the elders of Israel are called to assist. By the latter term is to be understood *sacrifices of peace-offerings*, or *eucharistic oblations*, and of these the banquet was exclusively composed; for it was not lawful to eat of the *burnt-offerings*, which were to be consumed whole as a holocaust. Comp. Lev. 7. 15, with Lev. 1. 9. Having had communion with each other in joy and thankfulness, they now continue it in a feast and a sacrifice, in which it is probable, that Jethro, who was priest of Midian, and a worshipper of the true God, officiated. What could be more decorous or proper than that such a friendship as subsisted between these holy men, should be consecrated by an act of joint-worship?——¶ *To eat bread.* The usual term for *food*. Yet it is reasonably supposed that an opportunity was afforded to Jethro of seeing and tasting that wonderful bread from heaven by which Israel was now sustained.——¶ *Before God.* That is, before the glory of God appearing in the cloud, or perhaps before the tabernacle, which we suppose to have been now erected. But we need not, on this account, exclude the additional sense of eating soberly, thankfully, in the fear and to the glory, of God. This they no doubt did, and from the whole incident we gather an example well worthy of imitation. Let those who enjoy the delight of a happy meeting, again to mingle the sympathies of friendship and domestic affection, after a season of separation, not fail, while acknowledging the goodness of God, to offer up their united tribute of thanksgiving to the Author of all their mercies.

13. *And it came to pass on the morrow*, &c. Due attention having been paid to the rites of hospitality, the dictates of friendship, and the demands of filial duty, Moses re-enters next day upon the discharge of his public functions as lawgiver and judge. Although the presence of his father, and the recent arrival of his wife and children, would seem to have given him a good pretence for at least a short respite from his judicial labors, yet he resumed his task the very next day after their coming, as if acting under the full force of the conviction that ceremonious attentions must give place to necessary business. And this, as a general rule, is no doubt correct. The time, the talents, of the minister of God, whether ecclesiastical or civil, are not his own, they belong to his fellow men; and if the burdens of such stations were duly considered, they would be much seldomer looked at with envy than they now are. The honors and emoluments are often wishfully eyed, while the thousand sacrifices of ease, of inclination, of health, of private attachment, are entirely overlooked. The anxious days, the sleepless nights, the painful toils, the causeless disaffection, the open odium, the secret aspersions, which one's official conduct incurs, are not taken into the account. Many would no doubt be eager to be Moses, sitting on high and judging the people; but who would be Moses, oppressed and worn down by the burden of the multitude thronged around him 'from the morning unto the evening'? The narrative makes it plain that Moses did not spare himself the most onerous duties of his station. In so vast an assembly it is easy to conceive that the controversies and matters of reference would be very numerous,

morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.

14 And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What *is* this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?

15 And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because [p] the people come unto me to inquire of God:

16 When they have [q] a matter, they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do [r] make *them* know the statutes of God, and his laws.

17 And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest *is* not good.

18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that *is* with thee: for this thing *is* too heavy for thee; [s] thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.

[p] Lev. 24. 12. Numb. 15. 34.

[q] ch. 23. 7. & 24. 14 Deut. 17. 8. 2 Sam. 15. 3. Job. 31. 13. Acts 18. 15. 1 Cor. 6. 1. [r] Lev. 24. 15. Numb. 15. 35. & 27. 6, &c. & 36. 6, 7, 8, 9. [s] Numb. 11. 14, 17. Deut. 1. 9, 12.

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and as the appeal was directly to Moses, as the organ of God, it would be inevitable that the load of responsibility and toil should be almost too great for human endurance. Jethro accordingly, observing the weighty and fatiguing cares which thus devolved upon his son-in-law, was convinced that his physical powers would soon sink under such a burden, and ventured to expostulate with him in regard to it. The reply of Moses shows how anxious he was to do his duty, and make himself the servant of all, notwithstanding the unworthy returns which he often met with at their hands. He tells him that he found it necessary to perform this arduous service, because the people wished, through him, to ascertain the *will of God*, as the supreme authority in their concerns.——¶ *Come unto me to inquire of God.* Heb. לדרש אלהים *lidrosh Elohim, to seek God.* That is, to inquire of me what is the mind and will of God, in whose name and authority I both speak and act. The original implies, however, more than a bare 'seeking.' It is applied to an *anxious, studious, careful quest*, as in consulting an oracle. It is to seek any thing, or apply to any person with earnest and affectionate interest; and therefore is not improperly, though still inadequately rendered in our translation 'to inquire of.' Gr. *εκζητησαι κριτιν παρα του Θεου, to seek judgment of God.* Chal. 'To seek doctrine from the face of the Lord.'

16. *When they have a matter.* Heb. כי יהיה להם דבר *ki yihyeh lahem dabar, when there is to them a word.* On this phraseology see Note on Gen. 15. 1. Gr. *αντιλογια, a controversy*, as also in Ex. 24. 14. Deut. 1. 12.——¶ *Between one and another.* Heb. בין איש ובין רעהו *bĕn ish u-bĕn rĕăhu, between a man and between his fellow;* a frequent Hebrew idiom.——¶ *I do make* them *know.* Heb. חודעתי *hodati.* Gr. *συμβιβαζω αυτους, I instruct them;* a version confirmed by comparing 1 Cor. 2. 16, 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may *instruct* (*συμβιβασει*) him,' with Is. 40. 13, 'Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath *taught him* (Heb. יודיענו *yodiĕnu, hath made him know.* Gr. *συμβιβα αυτον, instructeth him.*

18. *Thou wilt surely wear away.* Heb. נבל תבל *nabol tibbol;* a similitude drawn from the leaf of a tree, which withers for want of moisture. In like manner the corroding care growing out of such a charge on the part of Moses would soon exhaust the vital powers; as Moses himself in effect afterward acknowledges, Deut. 1. 9, 12. The advice given

19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and [t] God shall be with thee: Be thou [u] for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest [x] bring the causes unto God:
20 And thou shalt [y] teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them [z] the way wherein they must walk, and [a] the work that they must do.
21 Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people, [b] able men,

[t] ch. 3. 12. [u] ch. 4. 16. & 20. 19. Deut. 5. 5. [x] Numb. 27. 5. [y] Deut. 4. 1, 5. & 5. 1. & 6. 1, 2. & 7. 11. [z] Ps. 143. 8. [a] Deut. 1. 18. [b] ver. 25 Deut. 1. 15. 16. & 16. 18. 2 Chron. 19. 5.—10. Acts 3. 6.

by Jethro, in its whole tenor, and the manner of it, is a fine illustration of his character. It shows him to have been a very intelligent, wise, conscientious, and modest man; one of sound discretion, yet not disposed to dictate; and especially careful to have the *will of God* ascertained, even if it should be found to run counter to his judgment.

19. *I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee.* That is, by following my counsel you may anticipate the divine blessing. Chal. 'The Word of the Lord shall be for thy help.'——¶ *Be thou for the people to God-ward.* Chal. 'Be thou inquiring doctrine from before the Lord.'——¶ *That thou mayest bring the causes unto God.* Act thou as mediator and interpreter with God, bringing the causes of the people before him, and in turn also reporting 'the ordinances and laws' which constitute his decisions in the matters referred to him. The two verses, 19, 20, declare the two-fold office which he was to sustain, viz. that of advocate in behalf of the people, and interpreter on the part of God.

21. *Provide out of all the people able men.* Heb. אנשי חיל *anshĕ hayil, men of might or force;* i. e. men of vigorous, active, energetic character. See the import of the phrase explained,

such as [c] fear God, [d] men of truth, [e] hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, *and* rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:
22 And let them judge the people [f] at all seasons: [g] and it shall be, *that* every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and [h] they shall bear *the burden* with thee.

[c] Gen. 42. 18. 2 Sam. 23. 3. 2 Chron. 19. 9. [d] Ezek. 18. 8. [e] Deut. 16. 19. [f] ver. 26. [g] ver. 26. Lev. 24. 11. Numb. 15. 33. & 27. 2. & 36, 1. Deut. 1. 17. & 17. 8. [h] Numb. 11. 17.

Gen. 47. 6, where it is rendered 'men of activity,' while in 1 Chron. 26. 6, it is rendered 'mighty men of valor.' The leading sense is that of men of strong character, active, efficient men, possessing the qualities which in modern times we assign to those who are emphatically termed *good business men.* This was the first requisite. The second was that they should be men *fearing God;* that is, conscientious, pious, religious men; men deeply impressed with the conviction that there is a God above them, whose eye is upon them, to whom they are accountable, and by whose judgment their own will finally be tried; men who dare not do a base, mean, or unjust thing, whatever the temptation, or however secretly it might be done, because they are controlled by a holy awe of heaven. The next qualification insisted on is, that they should be *men of truth;* men whose word could be implicitly relied upon, men of approved fidelity, who would on no account utter a falsehood, or betray a trust. This is well explained in the Hebrew Canons; 'Men of truth are such as follow after rectitude for its own sake, who out of their own minds love the truth, and hate violent wrong, and flee from every kind of injustice.' Finally, they were to be men *hating covet-*

23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee *so*, then thou shalt be [i] able to endure, and all this people shall also go to [k] their place in peace.

24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said.

25 And [l] Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

[i] ver. 18 [k] Gen. 18. 33. & 30. 25. ch. 16. 29. 2 Sam. 19. 39.

[l] Deut. 1. 15. Acts 6. 5.

ousness, or in other words, influenced by a noble and generous contempt of worldly wealth, not only not seeking bribes, or aiming to enrich themselves, but cherishing a positive *abhorrence* of any such corruption. He only is fit to be a magistrate, who 'despiseth the gain of oppression, and shaketh his hands from the holding of bribes.' Is. 33. 15. Men of this character were to be selected, and placed over the people in regular subordination, so that each ruler of ten should be under the ruler of fifty, and so on, very much according to the order usually established in an army. These were to administer justice to the people in all smaller matters, while such as were of more importance were to be submitted to Moses as the ultimate appeal.

23. *If thou shalt do this thing, and God shall command thee so.* An entire freedom from the spirit of dictation, and a tone of the most exemplary and amiable self-distrust, is apparent in those words. Knowing that Moses had a better counsellor than he was, he gives his advice under correction, like a modest and pious man, who knows that all human counsel is to be given and received with an humble submission to the word and providence of God. He would have his suggestions followed only so far as they met with the approbation of him who is 'excellent in counsel and mighty in operation,' and infinite in both.——¶ *Then shalt thou be able to stand.* Heb. יכלת עמד *yakolta amod, thou shalt be able to stand;* i. e. to continue, to hold out; a phraseology strongly confirmatory of the sense attributed to the passage Ex. 9. 16, on which see Note.——¶ *Go to their place in peace.* That is, either to the land of promise whither they are travelling; or, shall return home in peace from the place of judicature, having obtained a speedy adjustment of their difficulties. Thus a man's *house* or *home* is called his *place*, Judg. 7. 7, 'And let all the other people go every man unto his *place;*' i. e. to his home, his place of residence. Judg. 9. 55, 'And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his *place*.'

24, 25. *So Moses hearkened*, &c. The advice which was so discreetly and kindly given, was candidly and courteously received. A man of a different spirit would perhaps have rejected the counsel thus tendered by a stranger. But Moses was above all the selfish littleness which would have prompted such a treatment of Jethro's suggestions, and he hesitated not, on considering its reasonableness, to adopt the plan proposed. The great Jehovah did not disdain to permit his prophet to be taught by the wisdom and intelligence of a good man, though he was not of the commonwealth of Israel. It is not a little remarkable that the very first rudiments of the Jewish polity were thus suggested by a stranger and a Midianite. The ruler of Israel accordingly proceeded to make choice of able men for this purpose. But we are not to understand by the language employed, that he did this alone. 'Moses chose,' i. e. he oversaw or superintended the choosing; for the election was un-

26 And they [m] judged the people at all seasons: the [n] hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

27 ¶ And Moses let his father-in-law depart: and [o] he went his way into his own land.

[m] ver. 22. [n] Job 29. 16. [o] Numb. 10. 29, 30.

doubtedly the act of the people. Deut. 1. 9, 13, 'And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone—take you wise men, and derstanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.' In like manner the deacons of the primitive church, Acts, 6. 3, were chosen by the people, and finally inducted into office by the apostles. So also Acts, 14. 23, 'And when they had ordained them elders in every church;' i. e. when they had, in conjunction with the people, and in the capacity of superintendents, seen to the appointment of elders; for the original word will not, without violence, admit of being construed as expressing the act of the apostles in contradistinction from that of the people.

26. *Judged the people at all seasons.* That is, at all times, except when they were forbidden by some paramount law requiring their attendance upon the services of public worship.

27. *And Moses let his father-in-law depart.* Heb. ישלח *yeshallah, dismissed, sent away.* That is, with the formalities usual on taking leave of an honored guest; such as accompanying him to some distance with more or less of an escort, and invoking blessings on his head. Comp. Note on Gen. 12. 20. The visit must have formed an important era in Jethro's life, and though we know of no particular authority for the statement of the Chaldee version, that he returned to make proselytes of his children, and of the people of his land, yet nothing would be more natural than that he should endeavor to impart to others the deep religious impressions which had doubtless been made upon his own mind. From Num. 10. 29, it would appear that his son Hobab, who probably came with him to the camp, remained with Moses in compliance with his request. See Note in loc.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day [a] came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai.

[a] Numb. 33. 15.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. *In the third month.* Heb. בחדש השלישי *bahodesh hashshelishi, in the third new (moon);* as the term properly signifies, by which is to be understood, according to Jewish usage, *the first day* of the month, although for the sake of greater explicitness the phrase, 'the same day,' is added, meaning the first day of the month. This was just forty-five days after their departure from Egypt; for adding sixteen days of the first month to twenty-nine of the second, the result is forty-five. To these we must add the day on which Moses went up to God, v. 3, the next day after when he returned their answer to God, v. 7, 8, and the three days more mentioned, v. 10, 11, which form altogether just fifty days from the passover to the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. Hence the feast which was kept in aftertimes to celebrate this event was called *Pentecost*, or the *fiftieth* day. And it was at this very feast that the Holy Ghost was given to the Apostles, Acts, 2. 1—4, to enable them to communicate to all mankind the new covenant of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Such a striking coincidence of times and seasons is peculiarly worthy of note.

2 For they were departed from [b] Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness: and there Israel camped before [c] the mount.

[b] ch. 17. 1, 8.

[c] ch. 3. 1, 12.

2. *They—were come to the desert of Sinai*, &c. Having now followed the children of Israel through their desert-wanderings, to the spot, which was selected by God himself as the scene of the most signal transaction recorded in all their history, it becomes important to ascertain as accurately as possible the general features of a locality distinguished as no other region of the earth has ever been. The peninsula of Sinai, lying between the two northern arms of the Red Sea, was chosen as the theatre of that scene of grandeur which the Israelites were now called to witness, and in our remarks on the ensuing chapter we have suggested some of the reasons which may be supposed to have dictated this choice. As might naturally be expected from the character of the events that have occurred there, the region of Sinai has been for many centuries a favorite place of pilgrimage for curious and pious tourists. In modern times, in consequence of the advances of civilization and the comparative ease of access, the tide of travel has set still more strongly in that direction, and a large amount of new and important geographical information has been the result. Still we cannot say that much has been done to render this information applicable to the exact elucidation of the Scripture narrative. Several important points are, perhaps unavoidably, unsettled; and among these is the identity of the mountain itself upon which the law was delivered. This renders it somewhat difficult to determine the precise tract which is to be understood by the 'wilderness of Sinai,' although there can be no great error in supposing it to be sufficiently extensive to embrace the range or cluster of mountains familiarly known under the title of 'Sinai' or 'Horeb.' But that the reader may be able to judge for himself on this point, we shall so far avail ourselves of the results of modern researches in the peninsula of Sinai, as to embody a brief description of the region in which the events of the present and succeeding chapter occurred.

The breadth of the peninsula of Sinai is intersected by a chain of mountains called 'El Tih,' which run from east to west, and cut off a triangular portion of the peninsula on the south, in the very centre of which occurs the elevated group of mountains where the Sinai of the Bible is to be sought. This mountainous region, with its various valleys and ravines of different dimensions, may be described as being comprehended within a diameter of about forty miles. Its general aspect is singularly wild and dreary, being composed almost entirely of naked rocks and craggy precipices, interspersed with narrow sandy defiles, which from being seldom refreshed with rain are almost entirely destitute of vegetation. Fountains and springs of water are found only in the upper regions of the group, on which account they are the place of refuge of all the Bedouins, when the low country is parched up. From all accounts it is difficult to imagine a scene more desolate and terrific than that which constitutes this range. A recent traveller (Sir F. Henniker) describes it as a sea of desolation. 'It would seem,' says he, 'as if Arabia Petræa had once been an ocean of lava, and while its waves were running mountains high, it was commanded suddenly to stand still!' Nothing is to be seen but large peaks and crags of naked granite, composing, as far as the eye can reach, a wilderness of shaggy rocks and valleys bare of verdure. Mr. Stephens, an American traveller, in his

'Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petræa, and the Holy Land,' thus graphically describes his approach to the region in question:—'Our road now lay between wild and rugged mountains, and the valley itself was stony, broken, and gullied by the washing of the winter torrents; and a few straggling thorn-bushes were all that grew in that region of desolation. I had remarked for some time, and every moment impressed it more and more forcibly upon my mind, that every thing around me seemed old and in decay: the valley was barren and devastated by torrents; the rocks were rent; the mountains cracked, broken, and crumbling into thousands of pieces; and we encamped at night between rocks which seemed to have been torn asunder by some violent convulsion, where the stones had washed down into the valley, and the drifted sand almost choked the passage. At every step the scene became more solemn and impressive. The mountains became more and more striking, venerable, and interesting. Not a shrub or blade of grass grew on their naked sides, deformed with gaps and fissures; and they looked as if by a slight jar or shake they would crumble into millions of pieces. It is impossible to describe correctly the singularly interesting appearance of these mountains. Age, hoary and venerable, is the predominant character. They looked as if their great Creator had made them higher than they are, and their summits, worn and weakened by the action of the elements for thousands of years, had cracked and fallen. The last was by far the most interesting day of my journey to Mount Sinai. We were moving along *a broad valley*, bounded by ranges of lofty and crumbling mountains, forming an immense rocky rampart on each side of us. The whole day we were moving between parallel ranges of mountains, receding in some places, and then again contracting, and about mid-day entered a narrow and rugged defile, bounded on each side with precipitous granite rocks more than a thousand feet high. We entered at the very bottom of this defile, moving for a time along the dry bed of a torrent, now obstructed with sand and stones, the rocks on every side shivered and torn, and the whole scene wild to sublimity. Our camels stumbled among the rocky fragments to such a degree that we dismounted, and passed through the wild defile on foot. At the other end we came suddenly upon *a plain table of ground*, and before us towered in awful grandeur, so huge and dark that it seemed close to us, and barring all further progress, the end of my pilgrimage—the holy mountain of Sinai. Among all the stupendous works of nature, not a place can be selected more fitted for the exhibition of Almighty power. I have stood upon the summit of the giant Etna, and looked over the clouds floating beneath it; upon the bold scenery of Sicily, and the distant mountains of Calabria; upon the top of Vesuvius, and looked down upon the waves of lava, and the ruined and half-recovered cities at its foot; *but they are nothing compared with the terrific solitudes and bleak majesty of Sinai.* An observing traveller has well called it a perfect sea of desolation. Not a tree, or shrub, or blade of grass is to be seen upon the bare and rugged sides of innumerable mountains, heaving their naked summits to the skies; while the crumbling masses of granite all around, and the distant view of the Syrian desert, with its boundless waste of sands, form the wildest and most dreary, the most terrific and desolate picture that imagination can conceive.' Carne, an English traveller, speaking of this district, says, 'From the summit of Sinai you see only innumerable ranges of rocky mountains. One generally places, in imagination, around Sinai, extensive plains or sandy deserts, where the camp of the hosts was placed; where the families of Is-

rael stood at the doors of their tents, and the line was drawn round the mountain, which no one might break through on pain of death. But it is not thus. Save the valley by which we approached Sinai, *about half a mile wide and a few miles in length, and a small plain we afterwards passed through, with a rocky hill in the middle*, there appear to be few open places round the mount. We did not, however, examine it on all sides. On putting the question to the superior of the convent, where he imagined the Israelites stood: Every where, he replied, waving his hands about,—in the ravines, the valleys, as well as the plains.'

The two most elevated and conspicuous summits of this peninsular group adjoin each other, and are respectively distinguished by the names of Djebel Katerin (Mount St. Catherine) and Djebel Mousa (Mount Moses); the former being for the most part locally identified with the Horeb of Scripture, and the latter with Sinai. Both terminate in a sharp peak, the planes of which do not exceed fifty or sixty paces in circumference. The former is the higher of the two, and its summit commands a very extensive prospect of the adjacent country,—the two arms of the Red Sea, a part of Egypt, and, northward, to within a few days' journey of Jerusalem. There is, however, very great confusion arising from the application of the ancient names 'Sinai' and 'Horeb' to these several summits. As both these appellations are practically unknown to the present inhabitants of the country, it has been left in great measure to the judgment or fancy of individual travellers to make the application. Professor Robinson, for instance, supposes a third still lower eminence in the same vicinity to be the true Horeb; while the Editors of the 'Modern Traveller,' and the 'Pictorial Bible,' contend for Mount Serbal, several miles distant, as the genuine Mount Sinai. No doubt a great portion of the difficulty on this head has been occasioned by the manner in which the Scriptures employ these names, viz. as if they were wholly convertible with each other. On this point we cannot but agree with the arguments and the conclusions of the last mentioned writers, of whom the latter speaks thus;—'In some passages of the Pentateuch the law is described as having been delivered from Mount Horeb, and in others from Mount Sinai, and this is one of the apparent contradictions, of which scepticism has availed itself to throw doubt on the verity of the narrative, or at least to question that the books in which these seeming discrepancies occur were written by the same person. The answer to this has been by a reference to Mounts Catherine and Moses, as distinct but adjoining peaks of the *same* range of mountains; and we have no doubt but that it was this view of the subject which occasioned the summits which now pass for Sinai and Horeb to obtain the distinction they now bear. But it does not appear to us how this answers the objection we have stated, because if Sinai and Horeb are only distinct summits of the same range, how could the same transaction take place in both at once, any more than if they were perfectly distinct mountains? From a careful examination of the various passages in which the names of 'Horeb' and 'Sinai' occur, we think it might be easy to show that these names are different denominations of the same mountain. But it seems to us that it is susceptible of being still more distinctly shown that 'Horeb' is the name of the whole mountainous region generally, while 'Sinai' is the name of the particular summit. It appears to us that Horeb is usually spoken of as a region, the common form of expression being generally 'in Horeb,' and that where spoken of as a mountain, it is in the same general way as when we speak of *Mount* Caucasus,

meaning thereby an extensive range of mountains. But 'Sinai' is usually spoken of as a distinct mountain; 'on,' or 'upon Sinai,' being the most common mode of expression, as we should speak of a particular mountain or peak in a mountainous or any other region. We believe there is no instance in which the name of Horeb occurs so as to convey the idea of ascent, descent, or standing upon it as a mountain, whereas this is invariably the idea with which the name of Sinai is associated. It is true that there are two passages which appear to militate against this view, but when carefully considered, they do in fact confirm it. Thus in Ex. 3. 1, 'Moses .. came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb;' and in 1 Kings, 19. 8, Elijah goes 'unto Horeb, the mount of God.' In both these places it would be most obvious to understand that Horeb denotes the whole, and the 'mount of God' the part; which will be the more evident when it is recollected that the term 'mount of God' would be no distinction at all, unless the region were also mentioned; because this distinction is not peculiar to the mountain on which the law was delivered. The reader who wishes to verify the view we have taken, will moreover find further confirmation by observing that actions are mentioned as having been done 'in Horeb,' which were certainly not done on any particular mountain, but in the surrounding valleys or plains. Thus the Israelites are said to have 'made a calf in Horeb,' (Ps. 106. 19)—certainly not in a mountain, but in the wilderness of Sinai while Moses was in the mountain. The rock smitten by Moses for water is called the 'rock in Horeb' (Ex. 17. 6), which according to the view we take, is compatible with the situation we have indicated for Rephidim; whereas those who regard Horeb as a particular mountain, and determine that mountain to be Djebel Katerin, have been necessarily obliged to fix the smitten rock in a wholly unsuitable situation, in the narrow valley of El Ledja at the foot of that peak. It also deserves to be noticed, that Josephus does not mention any mount called Horeb. He speaks exclusively of Mount Sinai, and after noticing the transactions at Rephidim, says that, on leaving that station, the Israelites went on gradually till they came to Sinai.' The writer having thus adjusted the relation to each other of the terms 'Horeb' and 'Sinai,' proceeds to adduce a variety of reasons to show that Mount Serbal, and not Mount Moses, prefers the strongest claims to being the place to which God descended at the giving of the Law. We must refer the reader to the pages of the Pictorial Bible for a very elaborate canvassing of the respective claims of these two localities. The principal difficulty in regard to the present Mount Sinai, is the want of sufficient space for the encamping of so large a host as that of Israel, and the impossibility of its summit, or that of Mount St. Catherine, being seen by all the people at the same time. Mount Serbal, on the other hand, he asserts, fully meets the idea which the reader of the Scripture is naturally led to entertain of Sinai, as a detached mountain, or rather cluster of mountains, with ample open ground around the base in which the host might encamp. Some of the vallies also about Mount Serbal are fertile and well-watered; whereas at the other point it would seem to have been scarcely possible to procure sufficient forage for their cattle. Another argument is drawn by the writer from the alleged identity of Mount Serbal and Mount Paran, mentioned in Habakkuk. The valley or wady at the base of Mount Serbal is still called 'Faran,' and as *p* and *f* are letters constantly interchanged in the oriental tongues, the inference, he contends, is wholly legitimate that Paran and Faran indicate the same locality, and that this is no other than Mount

3 And [d] Moses went up unto God, and the LORD [e] called unto him out

[d] ch. 20. 21. Acts 7. 38

[e] ch. 3. 4.

Serbal. On the whole, however, we incline to adhere to the more established opinion, which assigns the region of Djebel Katerin and Mousa as the scene of the great event in question, and the following extract from Prof. Robinson's account of his visit to the spot in 1838, will go to lessen very considerably the objection founded upon the limited space for encampment:—'We approached the central granite mountains of Sinai, not by the more usual and easy route of Wady Shekh, which winds around and enters from the East; but following a succession of Wadys we crossed Wady Shekh and entered the higher granite formation by a shorter route, directly from the N. N. W. through a steep, rocky, and difficult pass, between rugged, blackened cliffs, 800 to 1000 feet high. Approaching in this direction, we were surprised and delighted, to find ourselves, after two hours, crossing the whole length of a fine plain; from the southern end of which that part of Sinai *now* called Horeb rises perpendicularly in dark and frowning majesty. This plain is over two miles in length, and nearly two-thirds of a mile broad, sprinkled with tufts of herbs and shrubs, like the Wadys of the desert. It is wholly enclosed by dark granite mountains,—stern, naked, splintered peaks and ridges, from 1000 to 1500 feet high. On the east of Horeb a deep and very narrow valley runs in like a cleft, as if in continuation of the S. E. corner of the plain. In this stands the convent, at the distance of a mile from the plain; and the deep verdure of its fruit-trees and cypresses is seen as the traveller approaches,—an oasis of beauty amid scenes of the sternest desolation. On the west of Horeb, there runs up a similar valley, parallel to the former. It is called El-Leja, and in it stands the deserted convent El-Erbayin, with a garden of olive and other fruit-trees, not visible from the plain. The name *Sinai* is at present applied generally, to the lofty ridge running from N. N. W. to S. S. E. between the two narrow valleys just described. The northern part, or lower summit, is the present Horeb, overlooking the plain. About two and a half or three miles south of this, the ridge rises and ends in a higher point; this is the present *summit of Sinai*, the Jebel Mûsa of the Arabs; which however is not visible from any part of the plain. West, or rather W. S. W. of the valley El-Leja, is the still higher ridge and summit of Mount St. Catharine. The plain above mentioned is in all probability the spot, where the congregation of Israel were assembled to receive the law; and the mountain impending over it, the present Horeb, was the scene of the awful phenomena in which the law was given. As to the present summit of Sinai, there is little reason to suppose that it had any connection with the giving of the law; and still less the higher peaks of St. Catharine. I know not when I have felt a thrill of stronger emotion, than when in first crossing the plain, the dark precipices of Horeb rising in solemn grandeur before us, I became aware of the entire adaptedness of the scene to the purposes for which it was chosen by the great Hebrew legislator.' *Bib. Repos. for April* 1839. As to the convent which is here established, and which, from the increasing resort, bids fair to become little more than a sacred caravanserai, affording its inmates but little of that holy retirement which the location was intended to secure, the reader will find a full and interesting account in the work above mentioned, by our countryman Mr. Stephens, and in fact, in nearly all the published tours of modern travellers.

3. *And Moses went up unto God.* Heb. אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים *el ha-Elohim, to the*

of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 f Ye have seen what I did unto

f Deut. 29. 2.

the Egyptians, and *how* g I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

g Deut. 32. 11. Isai. 63. 9. Rev. 12. 14.

Elohim. That is, to the visible symbol of God's presence, which had now doubtless taken its station on the summit of the mount. Gr. εις το ορος του θεου, *to the mount of God*. Chal. 'Into the presence of the Word of the Lord.' The more attentively the sacred narrative is scanned, the more clear is the evidence, that wherever interviews between God and Moses or other good men are mentioned, there we are to understand that some *visible* manifestation of Jehovah was present, and that this visible phenomenon is intended to be indicated by the term 'Jehovah' or 'God.'—It will be noticed that the object of Moses' ascending the mount on this occasion was simply to receive and carry back to the people the message contained in the verses immediately succeeding, which was a more general intimation of the terms on which God agreed to form the Israelites into a distinct and peculiar people.——¶ *Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel*. This two twofold denomination of the chosen people is rather remarkable and no doubt was intended to carry with it some special emphasis of meaning. As the mercies conferred upon them as a people extended back into the history of the past, it was perhaps designed, by the use of these two names, to remind them of their humble beginnings and their subsequent increase; to suggest to them that they, who were once as lowly as *Jacob* when he went to Padan-aram, were now grown as great as God made him, when he came from thence and was called *Israel*. The mention of the twofold appellation of their ancestor, would tend also to excite them to obedience in conformity to his example.

4. *Ye have seen*, &c. It is a direct appeal to themselves, to their own observation and experience, for the truth of what is here affirmed. They could not disbelieve God without first disbelieving the testimony of their own senses.——¶ *How I bare you on eagles' wings*; i. e. *as* on eagles' wings; a similitude denoting the speed, the security, and the tender care with which they were, as it were, transported from the house of bondage, and which is expanded in fuller significancy, Deut. 32, 11, 12, 'As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him.' In like manner, as the church of Israel here fled from the dragon Pharaoh, as he is termed, Ezek. 29. 3, so the Christian church in a time of persecution is represented, Rev. 12. 14, as flying into the wilderness from the serpent or dragon, with two wings of a great eagle. Wings in this acceptation are a symbol of protection. The idea of this passage is strikingly set forth by the prophet at a long subsequent period, Is. 63. 9. 'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he *bare* them, and *carried* them all the days of old.'——¶ *Brought you unto myself*. Delivered you from the cruel bondage of Egypt, and graciously received you into a covenant relation to myself and the enjoyment of my special tutelary favor. This is the ultimate aim of all the gracious methods of God's providence and grace, to bring us back to himself, to reinstate us in his lost favor, to restore us to that relation in which alone we can be happy. Christ

5 Now [h] therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then [i] ye shall be a peculiar

[h] Deut. 5. 2.

[i] Deut. 4. 20. & 7. 6. & 14. 2, 21. & 26. 18. & 32. 8, 9. 1 Kings 8. 53. Ps. 135. 4. Cant. 8. 12. Isai. 41. 8. & 43. 1. Jer. 10. 16. Mal. 3. 17. Tit. 2. 14.

has died, 'the just for the unjust, that *he might bring us to God.*'

5. *Now therefore if ye will obey*, &c. Having briefly recounted the grounds of their obligation to him, the Most High now proceeds to state plainly the returns he should expect and require from them. This was in one word *obedience*—cordial, sincere, and unreserved obedience to the will of their best friend and kindest benefactor, who could have nothing in view but their happiness. This he demanded of *them*. On his own part, he promises a profusion of blessings, temporal, spiritual, and everlasting, of which the crown of all is that they should be *an appropriation to himself*. They should enjoy a rank of higher honor and tenderer endearment in his regard than any other people—a declaration, the scope of which will be more apparent from a closer inspection of the import of the particular terms.——¶ *A peculiar treasure.* Heb. סגלה *segullah*, a word of which we do not find the verbal root סגל *sagal* in Hebrew, but in Chaldee it signifies *to gain, to acquire to one's self, to make one's own, to appropriate.* Wherever the noun occurs in Hebrew it denotes a *peculium*, a possession or treasure of which the owner is peculiarly choice, one on which his heart is set, and which he neither shares with others nor resigns to the care of others. It has an obvious relation to the Latin word *sigillum, seal*, and is especially applied to such choice possessions as were secured with a *seal*, as gold, silver, jewels, precious stones, &c. Thus, 1 Chron. 29. 3, 'Because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of *mine own proper good* (Heb. of my סגלה *segullah*), of gold and silver, which I have given,' &c. Thus too, Mal. 3. 17, 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my *jewels*.' (Heb. my סגלה *segullah*).' Eccl. 2. 8, 'I gathered me also silver and gold and the *peculiar treasure* (סגלה) of kings and of the provinces.' 'By סגלה *segullah*,' say the Hebrew commentators, 'is signified, that they should be beloved before him, as a desirable treasure which a king delivereth not into the hand of any of his officers, but keepeth it himself. And such is the case of Israel, of whom it is said, Deut. 32. 9, 'For the Lord's portion is his people.' Thus too, Deut. 7. 6, 'Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a *special people* (סגלה) unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.' Ps. 135. 4, 'For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his *peculiar treasure* (לסגלתו *lisgulatho*).' In these cases the Greek rendering is mostly περιουσιος, *peculiar precious*, which occurs Tit. 2. 14, 'That he might purify unto himself a *peculiar people* (λαος περιουσιος), zealous of good works.' But in 1 Peter, 2. 9, the phraseology is a little varied, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, *a peculiar people* (λαος εις περιποιησιν),' which is the Septuagint rendering of the word 'jewels,' Mal. 3. 17. Throughout, the leading sense is that of *select, precious, endeared; something exceedingly prized and sedulously preserved;* and it would seem as if God would represent all the rest of the world as comparatively worthless lumber when viewed by the side of the chosen race. Chal. 'Ye shall be beloved before me.'——¶ *For all the earth is mine.* Or, '*though* all the earth is mine.' The sense, however, is essentially the same by either mode of rend-

treasure unto me above all people: for [k] all the earth *is* mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a [l] kingdom of priests, and an [m] holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

7 ¶ And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

[k] Ch. 6. 29. Deut. 10. 14. Job. 41. 11. Ps. 24. 1. & 50. 12. 1 Cor. 10. 26, 28. [l] Deut. 33. 2, 3, 4. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Rev. 1. 6. & 5. 10. & 20. 6. [m] Lev. 20. 24, 26. Deut. 7. 6. & 26. 19. & 28. 9. Isai. 62. 12. 1 Cor. 3. 17. 1 Thess. 5. 27.

ering. It was intended to enhance, in their estimate, the greatness of the divine favor in making them the objects of such a selection. Being the sovereign and proprietor of the whole world, and the fulness thereof, he needed them not; nor if he saw good to select any people was he under the least obligation, out of himself, to fix upon them. He might have taken any other nation in preference to them. The parallelism, Deut. 7. 7, 8, fully confirms this sense of the passage; 'The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bond-men, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.'

6. A kingdom of priests. Heb. ממלכת כהנים *mamleketh kohanim;* which the Gr. renders by an inverse construction βασιλειον ιερατευμα, *a royal priesthood,* the phraseology adopted by the apostle, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Chal. 'Ye shall be before me kings, priests, and an holy people.' The true sense of the expression is perhaps most adequately given Rev. 5. 10, where in allusion to the passage, it is said, 'Thou hast made us unto our God *kings* and *priests;* and we shall reign on the earth.' They were in fact to combine in their own persons the royal and the sacerdotal dignity, which is figuratively set forth in the Apocalyptic scenery by the elders being clothed in white robes, which was a badge of the priesthood, and at the same time having crowns upon their heads, which was an emblem of royalty. It would be impossible therefore to use language conveying the promise of higher honor, of more distinguished prerogatives, than this. As the priestly order was set apart from the common mass of the people, and exclusively authorised to minister in holy things, so *all* the Israelites, compared with other nations, were to sustain this near relation to God. They were to be, as it were, 'the first-born from among men,' consecrated to God from the womb, like the first-born of their own families. And when we add to this that they were *all* to be regarded at the same time as *kings* also, and none as subjects, a commonwealth of spiritual sovereigns, what can be conceived more exalted and honorary? Yet such is undoubtedly the import of the words, which is but little heightened by the subsequent phrase, 'an holy nation;' i. e. a nation hallowed, set apart, consecrated.

7. Moses came and called for the elders, &c. In so immense an assembly of people it would be necessary for Moses to treat with them through the medium of their *elders,* or the *principal men* in the several tribes. Having convened them for the purpose, he 'laid before their faces,' the message he had received from God, by which is meant that he fully explained to them what God had given him in charge, and submitted it to their serious judgment whether they would comply with the prescribed terms. The elders of course propounded the words to the people.

8 And [n] all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee [o] in a thick cloud, [p] that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and [q] believe thee forever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

[n] ch. 24. 3, 7. Deut. 5. 27. & 26. 17.

[o] ver. 16. ch. 20. 21. & 24. 15, 16. Deut. 4 11. Ps. 18. 11, 12. & 97. 2. Matt. 17. 5.
[p] Deut. 4. 12, 36. John 12. 29, 30. [q] ch. 14. 31.

8. *And all the people answered together.* Heb. יַעַן רִחְדָּו *yaanu yahdav.* Gr. απεκριθη ομοθυμαδον, *answered with one accord*, as the term ομοθυμαδον is also rendered Acts, 2. 1, and often elsewhere, implying rather *unanimity of counsel* than *simultaneousness of act.* It is of course to be supposed that the elders made known the conditions to the people whom they represented, and that they unanimously signified their acceptance of them, which was again reported by Moses through their official heads. Their answer discovers indeed a commendable promptitude in acceding to the terms and availing themselves of the proffered blessings, but the sequel shows that their response was given in a spirit of overweening self-confidence. They knew comparatively little of their own spirits, and rushed precipitately into the assumption of obligations, of the full import of which they had but little idea. Their conduct strikingly illustrates that of the convinced sinner, who feels the pressure of the divine claims upon his conscience, and fondly imagines that he shall have no difficulty in keeping the whole law. But experience soon shows him his error, as it did the Israelites.

9. *Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud.* Heb. בְּעַב הֶעָנָן *beab hëanan, in the thickness, or density, of the cloud.* Gr. εν στυλω νεφελης, *in the pillar of the cloud.* We know that God ordinarily resided among his people and presided over them in the cloudy pillar. But as this pillar changed its aspect to a pillar of fire by night, so we can easily imagine it to have assumed a denser and darker appearance on this occasion. As it was to be accompanied with lightnings and thunders, the whole scene would be rendered more sublime and awful by the increased darkness and density of that vast mass of cloud, towering above the summit of the mountain, which was to be the *ground* of these fearful phenomena. Our conceptions on this subject will be heightened by referring to the parallel language of the Psalmist, Ps. 18. 11, 'He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies;' i. e. not literally waters in their elementary state, but such thick dark lowering clouds as are generally charged with water, and empty themselves in gushing torrents of rain; in allusion to which it is said, Job. 26. 8, 'He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.' There was perhaps some reference in this mode of manifestation to the comparatively dark and obscure genius of the Mosaic dispensation. Of the ancient versions the Arab. renders this passage, 'I will manifest my Angel unto them in the thickness of clouds;' and the Jerus. Targ. 'My Word shall be revealed unto thee in the thick cloud.'——¶ *That the people may hear when I speak with thee*, &c. This discloses one grand purpose to be accomplished by such an impressive mode of manifestation. The highest possible honor, and credence, and deference was to be secured to the person of Moses, in order that the laws and ordinances

10 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and [r] sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them [s] wash their clothes,

[r] Lev. 11. 44, 45. Hebr. 10. 22. [s] ver. 14. Gen. 35. 2. Lev. 15. 5.

11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD [t] will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

[t] ver. 16, 18. ch. 34. 5. Deut. 33. 2.

which he was to introduce among the people in the name of God might be clothed with due authority. The grandeur and solemnity of the scene in which their leader was to act such a conspicuous part would eminently tend to produce this effect. And their hearing with their own ears the voice of God speaking to his servant, would utterly cut off all future pretext for saying that Moses palmed upon them a system of laws and statutes of his own devising, or imposed upon their credulity in any way whatever. In affirming this they would be witnesses against themselves. They had an ocular demonstration that the laws to which they were required to submit, were promulgated from the highest authority in the universe, of which Moses was merely the ministering mediator. It was not, however, merely from the men of that generation that God would exact this profound deference to the official character of Moses, but it was to be perpetuated in the line of their posterity to the latest days—'that they may believe thee for ever,' not only as long as they live, but as long as their descendants shall live. Accordingly our Savior himself recognises his authority, when he says in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them,' and 'if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, though one rose from the dead.'

10. *Go unto the people and sanctify them*, &c. That is, command and see that they sanctify themselves, as appears from the next clause, and from v. 14. In like manner it is said that Job (ch. 1. 5.) 'Sent and sanctified his sons;' i. e. ordered them to sanctify themselves; the agent, according to Scripture usage, being said to do that which he orders or procures to be done. We see at once the propriety of their being fitted by a special preparation for such a solemn interview with the Most High as now awaited them. When but a friend or neighbor is expected somewhat formally to visit us, the natural sentiment of decorum requires that our persons, our houses, our entertainment, should be invested with an air of more than usual neatness, order, and style. How much more, when the visiter is to be no other than the King of Kings himself! They were about to approach a holy God, a God of infinite purity, who cannot bear any unclean thing in his presence, and therefore they were to take care that no defilement was upon them. They were to wash their clothes and preserve their persons free from all impurity. They were even to abstain (v. 15) from all such innocent and lawful gratifications as might be unfavorable to the utmost degree of spirituality and abstractedness of soul in the exercises before them. Not that there was any intrinsic virtue in mere external ablutions and abstinences; they were to do this *in token* of their cleansing themselves from all sinful pollutions. While they were washing their clothes they were to think of washing their souls by repentance from the sins which they had contracted. Comp. Gen. 35. 2. Lev. 15. 5.

11. *The third day the Lord will come down*, &c. That is, will come down in the cloudy and fiery pillar, the symbol of his presence, the visible Shekinah; another of the innumerable instances in

12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye* go *not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: [u] whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

[u] Hebr. 12. 20.

13 There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through: whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the [x] trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

[x] ver. 16, 19.

which 'Lord' is used interchangeably with the term denoting his visible representative. His descent was to be in sight of all the people. We infer from this that the cloudy pillar rose to a great height in the heavens, for we believe there is no one of the several peaks of the Sinai group of mountains that could be seen from all the points where a body of two millions of men must have been encamped. Consequently, the pillar that surmounted the summit must have been very lofty.

12. *Thou shalt set bounds*, &c. Notwithstanding all the grandeurs and terrors of the scene, it was on the whole an illustrious instance of God's grace and condescension that he was pleased to vouchsafe to them such a signal display of himself on this occasion. Yet he would have them reminded of the humble awful reverence which should possess the minds of all those that worship him. Every semblance of unhallowed freedom and familiarity was to be studiously repressed. While Jehovah makes himself known as a Father, a Protector, a Guide, a Portion, he still would have his servants remember that he is 'the great and terrible God.' He therefore requires that they should worship him at a respectful and reverential distance, as being really unworthy even to lift up their eyes to the place which his footsteps were to make glorious.—— ¶ *That ye go not up into the mount.* Heb. בהר *bahar*, *in or upon the mount.* It is important, if possible, to ascertain the exact idea, as otherwise it will be difficult to determine what is meant by the permission in the next verse, 'when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount,' where the phraseology in the original is precisely the same, בהר *bahar*, *in or upon the mount.* It undoubtedly signifies something more than merely approaching the base of the mountain, its 'border' or extreme foot, and conveys the idea of some degree of *ascent* or *climbing* towards the summit.

13. *There shall not an hand touch it.* Heb. לא תגע בו יד *lo tigga bo yad*, *there shall not an hand touch him.* Our present translation evidently understands the 'mountain' as the object not to be touched with the hand. But *that* is forbidden in the clause immediately preceding, and here the true sense is doubtless that which is yielded by a literal rendering of the original. If a man or a beast should break through the prescribed limits and advance towards the mountain, they were not to rush in after him, apprehend him, and thrust him back, but on the contrary were to slay him on the spot by casting stones or shooting darts at him from a distance. Such a bold intruder upon forbidden ground, such a daring transgressor of an express divine precept, was to be regarded as so profane, execrable, and abominable, that they were not permitted to pollute their hands by touching him. What a speaking commentary upon God's estimate of presumptuous sin!—— ¶ *When the trumpet soundeth long they shall come up*, &c, Heb. במשך היובל *bimshok ha-yobel*, *in the drawing out of the trumpet;* i. e. of the sound of the trumpet. On the true import of the word יובל *yobĕl* here rendered 'trumpet,'

see Note on Josh. 6. 4, 5. It is the word applied to the sounding of the trumpet of *jubilee*, a term derived in fact from this very root, and supposed to denote an instrument either made of ram's horns, or constructed in that form. It was blown as a signal for the camp or congregation to assemble, or to do something in concert. Throughout the rest of the context the word for 'trumpet' is entirely different, viz., שפר *shophar*, for which reason some critics have supposed that the phrase in this place denotes a signal given by order of Moses in the camp for the approach of the people to the base of the mount, whereas in the sequel the sound of the שפר *shophar* was among the supernatural sounds and sights that distinguished the august occasion. This however is an interpretation which cannot well be reconciled with the context. Again, there is great uncertainty as to what is precisely to be understood by the sound of the trumpet's being *drawn out* or *prolonged;* whether it signifies a *growing intensity*, or *a remission, softening, dying away*, of the sound. The Gr. gives the latter sense, 'When the voices, and the trumpets, and the cloud are departed from the mountain, then shall ye go up.' Thus too the Syriac, 'When the trumpet shall have become silent, then it shall be permitted to you to go up.' So also the Chal. according to Fagius' version; 'When the trumpet shall be withdrawn, then shall they have leave to go up.' But it is very doubtful whether this is correctly rendered. The original במרגד שופרא *be-migad shophara* signifies according to Cartwright, Cum protracta fuerit buccina, *when the (sound of the) trumpet shall have been prolonged;* and thus substantially agrees with the Hebrew, the root נגד *negad* answering precisely to משך *mashak*, and both signifying to *draw out, extend, prolong*. The Vulg. on the other hand adopts the former, Cum cœperit clangere buccina, *when the trumpet shall begin to sound*. A comparison of the present passage with Josh. 6. 4, 5, seems rather to confirm the first of these as the genuine sense. Then the Israelites were commanded to compass the walls of Jericho for six days in succession, the priests continually blowing the rams' horns, and on the seventh 'when they make a long blast with the ram's horn (Heb. במשך בקרן הרבל *bimshok be-keren ha-yobel, in the drawing out* (of the sound made) *by the horn of the ram*, &c.—all the people shall shout.' By this is probably implied that when the sounding *shall have been long continued*, after they shall have heard it from day to day for six days, and through nearly the whole day on the seventh, then at the completion of the last circuit they should shout, and the walls would fall down. So here we are probably to understand that when the signal blast of the trumpet had been for a considerable time continued, they were to 'come up to the mount.' But this latter clause is if any thing still more difficult of explication than the preceding. Does it mean the removal of the foregoing restriction? It would seem that our translators supposed it did not, but implied rather that at the given signal the people were to approach *to* or *towards* the mount as far as the prescribed limits would permit. But this view of the matter is not favored by the original, which has יעלו בהר *yaalu bahar, come up in, into, or upon the mount*. The phrase is most evidently directly the reverse of the prohibition in v. 12, 'Take heed to yourselves that ye go not up into the mount (Heb. השמרו לכם עלות בהר *hishshameru lakem aloth bahar, beware for yourselves of going up in, into, or upon the mount*.' Such is the literal rendering of the two clauses, and how are they to be reconciled? As read in the letter they show a plain discrepancy, the one permitting what the other forbids. Some have proposed to surmount the difficulty by understand-

14 ¶ And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and [y] sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.

15 And he said unto the people, [z] Be ready against the third day: [a] come not at *your* wives.

[y] ver. 10. [z] ver. 11. [a] 1 Sam. 21. 4, 5. Zech. 7. 3. 1 Cor. 7. 5.

ing the clause as an *ironical concession;* as if God had intended to intimate that before the trumpet blast was heard they should be strictly charged not to overpass the boundaries, but that after that time, and when the sound began to wax louder and louder, then they might ascend *if they pleased, if they dared;* for then the terrors of the scene would be of themselves so tremendous and repulsive, that there would be no special need of any express veto to forbid a nearer approach. But such a sense seems hardly consistent with the solemnity of the scene, and we are constrained on the whole to yield our assent to the import affixed to the words by the old versions, viz., that the limitation was to be annulled and the mountain freely ascended *when the blast of the trumpet and the other supernatural sounds had been so long drawn out and protracted as to have become scarcely audible, and to be dying away upon the ear.* In other words we think that the Sept. rendering, though paraphrastic, gives the true sense; 'When the voices, and the trumpets, and the cloud, are departed from the mountain, then shall ye go up.' As they were to remain encamped for a year at the base of the mountain it might be important for them to be assured of the divine permission to ascend from time to time to its top, and devoutly contemplate a spot recently hallowed by the footsteps of the glory of Jehovah.

16. *And it came to pass on the third day,* &c. The eventful day at length arrived, the sixth of the month Sivan.

16 ¶ And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were [b] thunders and lightnings, and a [c] thick cloud upon the mount, and the [d] voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp [e] trembled.

[b] Ps. 77. 18. Hebr. 12. 18, 19. Rev. 4. 5. & 8. 5. & 11. 19. [c] ver. 9. ch. 40. 34. 2 Chron. 5. 14. [d] Rev. 1. 10. & 4. 1. [e] Hebr. 12. 21.

and the fiftieth after the departure from Egypt. The morning was ushered in with terrible thunders and lightnings, and a cloud of deep lowering darkness resting upon the summit of the mount. The heavens and the earth and the elements conspired to signalize, in the most impressive manner, the advent of the Creator and Lord of the universe to this part of his dominions. Nearly every object of grandeur and awe of which we can conceive, enters into the description. Thunder, lightning, tempest, the blackness of darkness, smoke, fire, earthquake, and the trumpet of God! Never, in all probability, till the light of the last morning shall dawn, and the trump of the archangel shall peal its summons to arouse the dead, will such a spectacle be again witnessed on earth. We have only to reflect upon the *design* of this august visitation to be satisfied that such an apparatus of awful accompaniments was in the highest degree appropriate and seasonable. A deep moral impression in regard to the law about to be delivered was to be produced. Every thing accordingly was so ordered as to afford the most striking display of the glorious majesty of the Lawgiver, to point out the character of the law in its strictness and rigor, and its tremendous penalty, and withal to furnish a preintimation of the day of judgment, when every transgression of it will come into account. He who has made us, and who perfectly knows our frame, knows how best to suit his dispensations to our condition. It is no matter of surprise, therefore, that He

who has an unlimited control over all the inlets to our sentient spirits should see fit, when the occasion warrants, to make the senses an avenue to the mind, and to seize the conscience or overawe the heart by speaking to the eyes or the ears, or to both at once. Such was his good pleasure on the delivery of the law from Sinai; and it is a consideration full of solemn import, that if God was truly awful in the harmless unconsuming fire at the bush of Horeb, and in the guiding and protecting pillar of cloud; if he was dreadful at Sinai, coming in fierce and threatening flames to promulgate his law; what must he be 'coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!" If the sound of that trumpet which proclaimed the approach of God to Israel was almost sufficient to kill the living with fear; what must be the trumpet which shall awake the dead? Whatever majesty and solemnity distinguished the giving of the Law, the whole earth shall eventually behold it exceeded in the consummation of the gospel.——¶ *In the morning.* Heb. בהית חבקר *bihyoth habboker, in the being made to be of the morning;* implying something peculiar and extraordinary in the atmospherical phenomena that ushered in that memorable morn. The usual phrase for 'in the morning' is בבקר *babboker,* and if nothing more than that simple idea was meant, it is not easy to account for the present unusual phraseology.——¶ *And there were voices and lightnings,* &c. Heb. וירהר קלת *va-yehi koloth.* Thunders are undoubtedly meant, a sense frequently conveyed by the Heb. word 'voice,' in proof of which see Note on Gen. 3. 8. The gloomy mass of cloud was unquestionably the seat of the thunders and lightnings which pealed and flashed from its bosom. And as the pillar of cloud was regarded as the throne of God, we see the pertinency of the allusion to this narrative in the mystic scenery of the Apocalypse, ch. 4. 5, 'And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices.'——¶ *The voice of the trumpet.* Heb. קל שפר *kol shophar, the voice or sound of a trumpet.* There is no clear authority in the original for the use of the more definite expression 'the trumpet,' as if in allusion to some trumpet previously mentioned. At the same time we are not prepared to affirm, although the יבל *yobel* and the שפר *shophar* were undoubtedly different, that they may not both refer to the same supernatural sounds heard on this occasion. The use of the term in either case may perhaps simply be to intimate that a sound was miraculously produced bearing a strong resemblance to that of a trumpet, though immeasurably louder. Perhaps the clangor of an unearthly trumpet was mingled in the din of the elements to deepen the conviction that the whole scene was preternatural. Thunder and lightning, and earthquake, and dark clouds were phenomena with which they were in some degree acquainted, and had there been nothing more, it might possibly have been thought, either then or in after ages, that the spectacle witnessed was merely an extraordinary tempest, the effect solely of natural causes, though acting with unwonted violence. But when a sound was heard shrill and piercing like the notes of a trumpet, but rising above the hoarse peals, the roaring and the crash of the thunder, such as was never heard before in any commotion of the elements, and such as never could issue from an instrument made by human hands or blown by human breath, no wonder that the impression upon the people was terrific beyond all conception. No wonder that the terms 'voice of the archangel and trump of God' should have arisen from this incident of the dread phenomena which struck the senses of assembled Israel at the base of the holy mount. It is undoubtedly from the circumstance

17 And [f] Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

18 And [g] mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it [h] in fire: [i] and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and [k] the whole mount quaked greatly.

19 And [l] when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, [m] Moses spake, and [n] God answered him by a voice.

20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses

[f] Deut. 4. 10. [g] Deut. 4. 11. & 33. 2. Judg. 5. 5. Ps. 68. 7, 8. Isai. 6. 4. Hab. 3. 3. [h] ch. 3. 2. & 24. 17. 2 Chron. 7. 1, 2, 3. [i] Gen. 15. 17. Ps. 144. 5. Rev. 15. 8.

[k] Ps. 68. 8. & 77. 18. & 14. 7. Jer. 4. 24. Hebr. 12. 26. [l] ver. 13. [m] Hebr. 12. 21. [n] Neh. 9. 13. Ps. 81. 7.

here mentioned that the Scriptures teach us to associate idea of the sound of a great trumpet with the awful occurrences of the day of judgment, of which the giving of the law from Sinai was intended to be a faint type and shadow.

17. *To meet with God.* Heb. לִקְרַאת הָאֱלֹהִים *likrath ha-Elohim, to meet the Elohim;* i. e. the Deity, in his visible apparition. Chal. 'To meet the Word of the Lord.'——¶ *Stood at the nether part of the mount.* Without the limits fixed by Moses.

18. *And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke,* &c. The appearances thus far seem to have been exclusively those described in v. 16, in which we have no mention of smoke or fire. But as the solemnities proceeded, the terrors of the scene became deeper. Nature seemed to have become more conscious of the approaching God, and discovered greater commotion. Dark and pitchy volumes of smoke, intermingled with lurid flames of fire, rolled up the sides and above the summit of the mount, as if issuing from an immense furnace, and just at this time the foundations of the perpetual hills began to be moved by the throes of an earthquake, which shook the solid rocky mass to its centre.

19. *When the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder.* Heb. הוֹלֵךְ וְחָזֵק מְאֹד *holĕk ve-hazĕk meod, going and strengthening exceedingly.* It is a phrase entirely different from that v. 13, and implies a growing intensity in the loudness of its clang.——¶ *Moses spake and God answered him by a voice.* What Moses said on this occasion, we are not informed; at least not in this connexion. The Apostle tells us, Heb. 12. 21, that in the midst of the terrors of the scene, he said, 'I exceedingly fear and quake;' and it is not improbable that it was precisely at this stage of the transaction that these words were uttered. As to the answer which God is said to have given him, a correct view of that depends upon the construction of the next verse.

20, 21. *The Lord came down upon Mount Sinai.* As it had been already said, v. 18, that the Lord descended upon the Mount in fire, we have little hesitation in adopting the suggestion of Calvin that all the verbs here should be rendered in the pluperfect tense, 'had come down,' 'had called,' 'had gone up,' and the whole verse considered as parenthetical. The scope of it seems to be, to inform us how it happened that Moses was in a situation to hold this intercourse with Jehovah; for it does not appear that in any stage of the proceedings did God communicate with Moses while he remained among the people below. He was invariably called up to the summit, or near the summit of the mountain. But as nothing had heretofore been said of Moses since he was represented as bringing the people out of the camp to their appointed station, and he is yet here set before us as holding communion with God, it was obviously proper to interpose the notice of his having

up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD o to gaze, and many of them perish.

22 And let the priests also which come near to the LORD, p sanctify

o See ch. 3. 5. 1 Sam. 6. 19. p Lev. 10. 3.

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been previously called up to the top of the mount. This is done in the twentieth verse. If this remark be well founded, it is perhaps to be inferred that God answered Moses' exclamation by giving him the order mentioned, v. 21, viz. to go down and restrain the people from breaking through the prescribed limits. Otherwise we must suppose that as Moses' words to God are not expressly recorded, so God's words to him are for wise reasons withheld. But however this may be, the charge which he was required to convey to the people leads us to suppose, that when they saw Moses passing unharmed into the midst of the fire, the smoke, and the lightning, their curiosity was excited to the highest pitch to learn the nature of elements at once so fearful to look upon, and yet apparently so innocent in their effect, and, accordingly, that many of them were upon the point of breaking through the boundaries to gaze more closely at the spectacle. This is confirmed by the Gr. *μη ποτε εγγυτερω προς τον Θεον κατανοηται, lest by any means they draw nigh unto God to consider;* i. e. to contemplate, to ponder, to study, implying the indulgence of a prying curiosity. The word is used in this sense in Stephen's speech, Acts, 7. 31, in reference to Moses at the burning bush.——¶ *Charge the people.* Heb. העד *haëd, testify unto.* Gr. *διαμαρτυραι, bear witness to;* the same word employed by Paul, 1 Tim. 5. 27, 'I charge thee (*διαμαρτυρομαι*) before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, &c.' So also 2 Tim. 2. 14, 'Of these things put them in remembrance, *charging them* (*διαμαρτυρομενος*) before the Lord that they strive not, &c.' Again, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 'I charge thee (*διαμαρτυρομαι*) therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, &c.' Thus the charge here appointed to be given was a *solemn testimony* of God, through Moses, of the consequences of disobedience.——¶ *Lest they break through unto the Lord.* That is, to the Shekinah, the visible manifestation of the Lord. The phraseology throughout the narrative is wonderfully in keeping with this idea.——¶ *And many of them perish.* Heb. נפל ממנו רב *naphal mimmenu rab, many of them fall.* Gr. *πεσωσιν εξ αυτων πληθος, a multitude of them fall;* i. e. be destroyed by being put to death in obedience to the command, v. 12, 13. We cannot fail to learn from this, that a prying curiosity in relation to matters which God does not see fit to reveal to his creatures is not only highly presumptuous, but fraught with danger.

22. *Let the priests also which come near to the Lord sanctify themselves.* Heb. הכהנים הנגשים אל יהוה *hakkohanim hanniggashim el Yehovah, the priests coming near to the Lord;* i. e. whose duty, whose function, it is, on ordinary occasions, to come near to the Lord. Chal. 'Which come near to minister before the Lord.' But as the Aaronical priesthood was not yet established it becomes a question who are meant by the term. We learn from Ex. 13. 2, that the *first-born* of every family were in a special manner to be dedicated and sanctified to God, and it is clear, from the whole tenor of the patriarchal history, that the honor of the priesthood was considered as involved in the rights of primogeniture. As this was the case, and the tribe of Levi was afterwards substituted instead of the first-born, we cannot well doubt that the *eldest sons* throughout the tribes

themselves, lest the LORD [q] break forth upon them.

23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, [r] Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

[q] 2 Sam. 6. 7, 8.

[r] ver. 12. Josh. 3. 4.

were at this time considered as invested with so much of the priestly character as to be properly employed on all occasions when any peculiarly sacred ministrations were to be performed. We may therefore suppose that this class of the people are intended by the appellation 'priests,' and that they are the same as we afterwards, Ex. 24. 5, find denominated 'young men of the sons of Israel,' many of whom were, in all probability, at the same time *heads, chiefs,* and *elders* of the people, and so still more properly to be viewed as having the superintendence of the sacred services. These were charged in a peculiar and emphatic manner to 'sanctify themselves' on this occasion, i. e. by abstaining from presumptuous intrusion; for the nearer persons are brought to God by their office, the more dangerous and deadly are their transgressions. They had no doubt shared with the rest of the people in that previous personal sanctification which had been enjoined, v. 10, so that that cannot here be alluded to. The meaning is rather, that considering the force of their example, the obedience which they were to evince was to be so strict, so punctilious, so conscientious, that it would be considered as amounting to a 'sanctification' of themselves in the sight of God. Comp. Lev. 10. 3, 'Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' The implication is, that while in the obedience of common persons God is *honored,* in that of his priests he is *sanctified.*

——¶ *Lest the Lord break forth upon them.* Heb. פרץ *yiphrotz, break violently forth.* The word is not the same with that applied in the preceding verse to the breaking through of the people in respect to the prescribed limits. That is a very emphatic word ירחסר *yehersu,* having the import of *subverting, razing, destroying,* as of houses, walls, fortifications, &c, and therefore very well applied to the rushing and pressure of a crowd who break down, trample under foot, and obliterate, any kind of fence or barrier set up to check their progress. But the root פרץ *paratz* is equally significant as spoken of God, and conveys the idea of a sudden, fearful, and destructive bursting forth of his judgments against opposers. Thus, 2 Sam. 5. 20, 'And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The Lord hath *broken forth* (פרץ *paratz*) upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place *Baal-perazim* (בעל פרצים *baal peratzim,* i. e. *plain of breaches*).' So also, 2 Sam. 6. 8, 'And David was displeased, because the Lord had *made a breach* upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place *Perez-uzzah* (פרץ עזה *peretz Uzzah, breach of Uzzah*) to this day.' We are no doubt prone to be covetous of license beyond what God has seen fit to allow us, but we may assure ourselves that he always has conceded and always will concede as much as will be for our good, and with such precepts and such examples as we have here cited, we cannot but see that it is at our utmost peril that we presume to go beyond the salutary limits, both of knowledge and action, which he has imposed.

23. *The people cannot come up.* Not that there was any physical impossibility in the way, but Moses seems to

24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through, to come up unto the LORD lest he break forth upon them.

25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

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have thought that by reason of the unutterable terror and glory of the scene, it was *morally impossible* that the people should any of them be so presumptuous as to transgress an order which he had once so expressly delivered to them, and which he had guarded by setting bounds according to divine direction. Thus it is that in the consciousness of a due deference to the will of God in themselves, the good and the charitable are sometimes prone to entertain a more favorable opinion of human nature than the truth will warrant. God often sees a necessity of uttering cautions and repeating commands of which his right-minded servants are but little aware.

24. *Thou and Aaron with thee.* God does not see fit to make any direct verbal reply to Moses' remark, nor does he intimate that he had been guilty of remissness in any part of *his* duty, but he repeats the order that he should go down, not only to renew his warning to the priests and people, but also to take Aaron and bring him up with him to the top of the mount. As he was about to invest him with the honors of the high priesthood, it was fitting that he should put upon him such tokens of distinction as would inspire the people with a profound respect for his dignity and authority.——¶ *Let not the priests and the people break through to come up.* Gr. μη βιαζεσθωσαν αναβηναι προς τον Θεον, *let them not violently press to come up to God.* As if the danger were that in their anxiety to gaze they should even attempt to advance up the sides of the mountain, from which all but Moses were strictly interdicted. As the priests were ordinarily permitted to approach nearer to God than the rest of the people in the discharge of their official duties, they might perhaps be at a loss to see why they might not follow Moses, and still more Aaron, in his near access to the Lord, and thus be emboldened to promise themselves impunity even if they went beyond the limits prescribed to the rest of the people.

25. *And spake unto them.* Heb. וידאמר *va-yomer, and said* unto them. But *what* he said unto them is not stated; for which reason some have thought that וידאמר *va-yomer* in this connexion was equivalent to וידבר *va-yedabber, and he spake*, as our translation has it. But we may still take the verb in its usual sense by supplying, with Jarchi, the objective clause; 'He said or delivered to them this admonition,' i. e. what is contained in the preceding verse. 'Moses went down and said *it* unto them.' *Ainsworth.*

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAW.

The sacred historian, having fully detailed in the preceding chapter all the various preliminaries to the delivery of the Law, comes now to the account of the solemn transaction itself—the most remarkable event, perhaps, taken in all its bearings, that occurred in the history of the chosen people prior to the incarnation of Christ, and one of the most remarkable that ever did or will distinguish the annals of the world itself. The occasion was indeed one which had a primary reference to the nation of Israel, 'to whom,' says the apostle, 'pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, *and the giving of the law*,

and the service of God, and the promises.' But it was not an event constituting the national distinction of that people only. It was one affecting the whole human race in its deepest interests, both temporal and eternal. God himself descended from heaven and by a supernatural voice promulgated to man the *Moral Law*, the expression of his will, the reflection of his nature, the immutable standard of right, the inflexible rule of action for his accountable creatures, containing every essential principle of duty, and embodying the grounds of all the future rewards and punishments to be enjoyed or suffered throughout the ages of eternity. These considerations impart to this event a magnitude and importance scarcely to be paralleled by any thing else which has come within the range of our expositions, so that the nature and scope of the Law itself, the various circumstances attending its promulgation, the phraseology in which it is couched, and the principles of its interpretation demand the most careful investigation. Such an inquiry will be best conducted under the several distinct heads that follow.

1. *Various Divisions and Titles of the Law.*

As the people of Israel may be viewed under a threefold aspect, so we have a foundation laid in this fact for a threefold acceptation of the word *Law*. They may be viewed, (1.) As rational and responsible creatures, depending upon God, and subject to his will as the supreme Ruler and Judge of the universe. In this capacity the *law of the ten commandments*, or the *moral law*, was given to them, which is substantially one and the same with the *law of nature*, and binding all men as such. (2.) As the church of the Old Testament, expecting the Messiah, and furnished with a system of worship embracing a great variety of rites and ceremonies, which pointed more or less distinctly to him. Viewed in this ecclesiastical character God bestowed upon them the *ceremonial law*, which was a body of rules and precepts regulating their religious worship. (3.) As a peculiar people, having a civil polity and constitution especially appointed for them, and distinguishing them from all other nations, their government being in fact *a theocracy*, in which God himself was their supreme magistrate. Viewed in this light a code of *civil* or *political* laws was prescribed them. The term 'the law' is sometimes applied to one of these systems, and sometimes to another, and again to the whole taken collectively; so that we must often be governed in great measure by the context in determining the precise sense in which the term is used. It is however most legitimately and emphatically employed in reference to the first of these, or the *moral law*, which was distinguished from the others by being audibly delivered by God himself and afterwards written by him upon two tables of stone. Of this Law one of the prevailing scriptural designations is 'the ten words,' or 'ten commandments,' a phraseology which is fully considered in the notes on the first verse of this chapter. The term 'Decalogue' is wholly equivalent, being derived from the Gr. δεκαλογος, from δεκα, *ten*, and λογος, *word*. The origin of this appellation is easily to be traced to such passages as the following, Ex. 34. 28, 'And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, *the ten commandments* (Gr. τους δεκα λογους).' Deut. 13. 4, 'And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *were ten commandments* (Heb. עשרת הדברים *asereth haddebarim*, *the ten words*, Gr. τα δεκα ρηματα); and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.' In other connexions we find the several terms *Law*, *Covenant*, *Testimony*, *Statutes*, *Precepts*, *Commandments*, &c. applied as a designation of the moral code

delivered at Sinai, the grounds of which are either so obvious as not to require particular exposition, or are sufficiently unfolded in the course of the ensuing notes; so that a precise explication of them may at present be waved.

2. *Classification of the Precepts of the Law.*

In all ages of the church it has been admitted that the Moral Law was comprised in ten distinct commandments. Of these again a very ancient and generally recognized division is into *two tables;* the first embracing the first four, the second the last six, of the precepts; the first containing, in a general way, the duties we owe to God, the second, those which we owe to our fellow-men. This division, which is very natural, is warranted by the express words of the Savior, Mat. 22. 37—40, who divides the Law into two great commandments, 'Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.'

In the numerical arrangement and distinction of the several precepts of the decalogue, it is well known that the Romanists differ essentially from Protestants. Following the authority of Augustin, the Roman Church makes but one commandment of the two first, while in order to keep good the number ten, they divide the tenth into two, making the first sentence of that commandment the ninth. The consequence has been that in many professed recitals of the ten commandments in books of devotion, what *we* term the *second*, forbidding idolatry, is entirely omitted. The motive for thus abstracting the second commandment from the Decalogue is very easily imagined on the part of a church which gives so much countenance to image-worship; and it is equally obvious that the partition of the tenth into two, is wholly with a view to compensate the mutilation by leaving the *nominal* integrity of the code unimpaired. That such a disjunction of the parts of the tenth commandment is wholly unauthorized and violent, will be evident upon a comparison of the text as it stands in the chapter before us and in Deut. 5. 21. In the present passage the coveting of a 'house' occurs *before* the coveting of a 'wife;' whereas in the other passage the order is reversed and 'house' occurs *after* 'wife.' If then the Papal division were well founded, the *ninth* commandment according to the one reading would be, 'Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's *house*,' and according to the other, 'Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's *wife*.' Such a diversity it appears from Hallett's Notes on Scripture Texts (vol. 3. p. 55.) actually exists in some of the Catechisms and Manuals of the Roman church. But suppose, with Protestants, that 'house' and 'wife' belong to the same precept, and the change in collocation is a matter of no moment.

A difference occurs also between the Heb. and the Gr. copies in regard to the collocation of the *sixth* and *seventh* commandments. The Gr. places our seventh before the sixth, and this order is followed by such of the early Christian Fathers as used the translation of the Seventy, as also by Philo among the Jews. The Gr., however, preserves the usual order of the Heb. text in Deut. 5. 17, 18. In the New Testament a similar diversity obtains. In Mark, 10. 19, and Luke, 18. 20, the prohibition of 'adultery' comes before that of 'killing;' while in Mat. 19. 18, the Heb. arrangement is observed. The inference is fair from this that provided the integrity of the Decalogue be preserved, and there be no addition to nor subtraction from the true number, the precise order of enumeration is not a matter of any great moment.

3. Nature and Scope of the Law.

It is too obvious to require proof that man was formed to be a creature of law. At his very creation, the law of God was written on his heart. Those divine fingers which so curiously wrought the physical fabric of his body, interwove also the precepts of this law with the interior frame-work of his soul. Nor are we to suppose that man had been utterly destitute of all external notices of this law from the creation to the present time. Though not previously so expressly and formally revealed, yet as sin was in the world from Adam to Moses, so we cannot doubt that that law, by the knowledge of which is the knowledge of sin, was also in the world. But nothing is more certain than that in process of time all flesh had corrupted its way, and the traces of the moral code were nearly obliterated among men. The great fundamental truths of religion were lost and buried in the abounding idolatry and immorality that every where prevailed. In these circumstances, when it pleased God to separate to himself a peculiar people, who should know his will, and be the depositaries of his truth, he saw fit to *republish* this law, and so to record it as to give it a permanent establishment in the world; and in order to convey a more suitable impression of its spirit and design, it was to be delivered in circumstances of the greatest imaginable pomp and terror. The intrinsic propriety of this will be seen at once on considering the character of the Law. As contrasted with the Gospel it was a dispensation of wrath, a ministration of condemnation and death. 'Cursed be every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,' is its inexorable language. It was a 'fiery law,' denouncing judgment without mercy for every offence, and not knowing either abatement, or intermission, or compromise of its stern demands. The circumstances of its delivery, therefore, were intended to be in keeping with its character. Being a transcript of the divine perfections, it was to be so promulgated as to impress those who heard it, and those who should hear of it, with a just sense of the greatness, majesty, glory, and terribleness of that Being from whom it emanated. It was designed to work a deep conviction of the fearfulness of Jehovah's displeasure, and to inspire alarm by awaking a sense of sin. Accordingly, as it was attended with the terrors of Sinai in its proclamation, so it comes into the conscience with the dread of God's wrath. As the mountain shook, as the people trembled, as Moses himself said, 'I exceedingly fear and quake,' so the soul when it becomes convinced of sin, is filled with dismay. Fearfulness and trembling come upon it; it shakes with violent apprehensions of woe, and looks for instant destruction. Such is the necessary consequence. Whenever a man obtains a correct view of the Law, and feels that he has broken it; when he sees that the Law is spiritual, and that he is carnal, sold under sin; when he perceives that he is condemned, and every moment liable to the curse; he cannot but experience the same kind of inward emotions and perturbations as the Israelites experienced when they saw the fires of Sinai, heard its thunders, and felt its shaking. Thus one main object of the giving of the Law was attained—the begetting a sense of native sinfulness, of distance from God, of exposedness to wrath. But this would lead directly to another of equal importance—the necessity of a Mediator. And this effect was very decidedly wrought on the present occasion. They were conscious that they could not approach to God without some kind of intervention. Accordingly, they who but just before had been with difficulty restrained from breaking through the bounds that had been assigned them, were now so alarm-

ed that they drew back from their station, and entreated that God would no longer deliver his commands to them in that way, lest they should die. They desired that Moses might act as a mediator between God and them, and that all future intimations of the divine will should be given through that medium. They were not perhaps aware of the full meaning of their own request, nor of how much a greater mediator than Moses they stood in need. But God approved of their request, and not only complied with it, but promised another Mediator at a future period, who should resemble Moses, and whom the people were required, under the highest penalty, to obey. For it was on this occasion that the promise contained Deut. 18. 15—19, was given, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.' The agency of Moses, therefore, throughout the whole transaction, passing to and fro between God and the people, now ascending the mount and entering the cloud, and now again coming forth, returning to the camp, and delivering his messages, was expressly designed as a lively type of the mediatorship of Christ in effecting our acceptance and salvation. And thus it serves, as the apostle says, 'as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.'

With this view of the essential nature and genius of the Law before us, we cannot easily fall into the error against which the apostle Paul has so anxiously warned us, of supposing that it was given in order to man's being saved by his living up to its demands. It was not given to give life. 'By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.' It was rather designed as a divine revelation of man's religious and moral duties, as a perfect standard and rule of obedience, and one too of perpetual and universal obligation. For as every precept of it flows directly from the unchangeable perfections of God, it must for ever make the same uncompromising demand upon the obedience of its subjects. The ceremonial statutes might serve a temporary end and be abolished. But of the Moral Law our Savior says, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.' It must necessarily enter into the Christian dispensation, and pervade it through every period of its existence. It will even pass into heaven itself and there be the delight and govern the service of every glorified spirit and ministering angel. This will be more evident if we consider that it is the universal law of *love*. God is love, and his Law inculcates love. A compend of the whole Law is embraced in the precept, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy mind and all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' Love therefore must be of universal and eternal obligation, immutable as the nature of God himself. God cannot divest himself of love, nor even abrogate the Law which requires it.

From all this we perceive the great ends which were to be answered by the promulgation of the Law of the ten commandments, and for the same reasons we can see why it was that such a

scene was chosen for the purpose. The genius of the Law was severe, rigid, dark, fearful, terrific. In accordance with this the people of Israel were led into a dreary, desolate wilderness, a region of barren rocks and thirsty sands, where all nature appeared in its most wild, and rugged, and desert aspect. There, amidst bleak mountainous masses of granite, separated by narrow ravines, in which only here and there little patches of herbage, and scattered trees are found, the Law of Sinai was proclaimed, as if it were especially intended to teach them that that dispensation, compared with the gospel, was like the most desert and forbidding locality on the earth's surface contrasted with the most blooming and luxuriant paradise which the hands of nature and art ever conspired to beautify. This view of the event before us will no doubt become more and more striking, in proportion as the geological and topographical features of that region are more fully disclosed, as they are in a fair way to be, in consequence of the growing influx of travel into that memorable and interesting quarter of the globe.

4. *Principles of Interpretation.*

'Thy commandment,' says David, 'is exceeding broad;' in which we read a clear intimation of the extent and spirituality of the divine requirements, as reaching beyond the outward actions, and taking cognizance of the inmost thoughts and intentions of the heart. With so important a portion of revelation, therefore, before us, it is evidently a matter of great moment to fix upon correct principles of interpretation, and in coming at these, nothing is more obvious than that the mode of interpretation adopted by Christ and his apostles is to be a directory for us in putting our constructions upon the precepts of the Decalogue. Referring then to our Lord's sermon on the mount, it is clear beyond all question that the Law, properly understood, lays its demands and its prohibitions upon the inward actings of the spirit, and not merely upon the outward conduct. If we are taught by this supreme authority to regard cherished lust as adultery, and harbored hate as murder, how can we avoid the inference that all the commandments are equally extensive in their import, and address themselves directly to the *heart* as the fountain of action and the criterion of character? To the same conclusion are we irresistibly brought by the language of Paul in his reasonings upon the Law in the Epistle to the Romans. It was only when he came to understand fully the spiritual nature of the Law and the sternness and universality of its requirements, that he became convinced of sin, and, as it were, *slain* by its killing power. The same view of the character of this deeply searching moral code is undoubtedly maintained throughout the whole tenor of the Scriptures, so that we cannot well hesitate to admit the justness of the canon laid down in the Assembly's Catechism, for interpreting the demands of the Law, 'that it binds every one to full conformity in the whole man, unto the righteousness thereof, and to entire obedience for ever; so as to require the utmost perfection in every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.' Accordingly, in putting a due sense upon the several precepts, we must admit that 'when a particular duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden, with all the causes, occasions, and temptations which might lead to it; and when a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded, together with all the requisite means to its performance.'

It may also be remarked in regard to the distinction of the precepts into *affirmative* and *negative*, that there is ground for it in the consideration that what God *forbids* is at *no time* to be

done; what he *commands* is always our duty, yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times. Moreover, it must be perceived that in the negative mode of injunction, there is something more emphatic, and that leaves less room for evasion. Thus, had the first commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other gods, &c.,' been propounded affirmatively, 'Thou shalt worship one God,' the Samaritans, for instance, might still have contended that they kept this commandment, though they mixed the worship of other gods with that of the true.

On the whole, it is obvious that this momentous and immutable Law is framed with the utmost wisdom of its divine author, and that if its deep spirituality, its rigid and uncompromising demands, its perpetual authority, and its awful sanctions, were duly appreciated, it would awaken and keep alive every where the slumbering consciousness of sin, and at once lead to and endear the atonement of Christ, who was made a curse for us that he might redeem us from the curse of the violated Law.

5. *Ministry of Angels in the Delivery of the Law.*

No attentive reader of the Scriptures can fail to have been struck with the fact, that in several passages, both of the Old and New Testament, the presence and the agency of angels is expressly recognized on the occasion of the giving of the law. A somewhat extended and minute examination, therefore, of the circumstances attending this remarkable event will here be proper, in order to obtain, if possible, the true clue to the language employed by the sacred writers in describing it. It will be evident, if we mistake not, from the tenor of our annotations on the preceding chapter, that the pillar of cloud, the sublime Shekinah, which had hitherto directed the journeyings of the Israelites, now removed itself from over the place of their encampment and took its position on the mountain. Here it assumed, in the first instance, a hue of dense and pitchy darkness, which would contrast more strongly with the fiery splendors that were ere long to burst out of its bosom, and together with the earthquake, and the thunder, and the trumpet-blast, to clothe the scene with a grandeur utterly unparalleled on earth. It is true, the Shekinah is here presented in aspect different from any in which we have yet contemplated it. We have hitherto beheld it in connexion with an audible voice—as a fire burning in but not consuming the bushy thicket—as an illuminated pillar of cloud—but no where else have we seen it with the accompaniment of thunders and lightnings and the voice of a trumpet, and all the fearful array of Mount Sinai. Still that this *was* an actual exhibition of the Shekinah the narrative leaves us no room to doubt. The ancient versions plainly confirm this view. Of these one of the Chaldee Targums renders the account in the 19th chapter;—'Moses led the people out of the camp to meet the Shekinah of Jehovah;' another, 'to meet the Word of the Lord;' and the Arab, 'to meet the Angel of the Lord.' Now it is to be recollected that we have previously shown that the visible Shekinah is repeatedly termed the 'Angel of the Lord,' and that this is the true object which is to be brought before the mind whenever in the books of Moses the title 'Angel of the Lord' occurs. The Shekinah was so called because it was the ordinary *medium* or *organ* through which the Most High manifested his presence and evinced his favor or disfavor towards the chosen people. Bearing this fact in mind, let us turn to Acts, 7. 37, 38, where in the speech of Stephen it is said, 'This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me: him shall ye hear. This is he that

was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us.' Here it is evident that the 'Angel' mentioned is no other than he who was the great Speaker on the occasion of the delivery of the Law, and that this was Jehovah himself in his appropriate symbol of the cloudy pillar is, we think, indubitable. But here there is comparatively little difficulty, as the term 'Angel' is singular and refers plainly to a single personage. In the following passages however the term is plural, and the solution, not so directly obvious. Gal. 3. 19, 'It (the Law) was *ordained by angels* in the hand of a mediator.' Again, Heb. 2. 2, '*For if the word spoken by angels* was steadfast,' &c. No one can fail to see that in these passages the presence of *angels* is recognized as in some way connected with the sublimities and sanctities of the awful scene. It is not merely the *one Angel* of the Shekinah who is referred to, but there is a clear implication of the accompanying presence of *a multitude of the heavenly hosts*. How then is this to be understood? Moses in his narrative says nothing of such an angelic appendage to the scene, and it is an important enquiry whence such a usage of speech may be supposed to have originated. It will be seen from our Notes on Ex. 25. 18, that the Cherubim are properly to be regarded as a *symbol of multitude;* and ample proof may be adduced that *a multitude of angelic attendants* was always supposed to accompany the Shekinah. From the very first introduction of these sacred symbols into the divine economy at the garden of Eden they were always viewed in this light, and though occasionally the visible Glory might appear when the accompanying multitudes did not, yet in the minds of the chosen people they were habitually associated with it and viewed as in fact involved in it. Indeed, the remarkable device of the Ark of the Covenant, with its appurtenances of the Glory and the Cherubim was nothing but *a sensible embodiment* of this ancient and established idea, which had been familiar to the patriarchs from the earliest ages of the world. To this ideal host, though ultimately adumbrating *men* rather than any other order of beings, yet with entire propriety they assigned the title of *angels*. That these angelic hosts should constitute a distinguishing part of the supernatural apparatus of the present scene would be a matter of course; and nothing would be more congruous to scriptural usage than to ascribe to them a special *agency* or *execution* on the occasion, from their being present, consenting, and cooperating with the divine Lawgiver. It is ascribed to them on the same grounds on which Paul affirms that the saints shall judge the world, by which at the same time nothing more is meant than that they shall be *coinciding assessors* with the great Judge himself. That this New Testament mode of speaking of the delivery of the Law is warranted by the usus loquendi of the Hebrew Scriptures will be evident from the following citations. Deut. 33. 2, 'The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, *and he came with ten thousands of saints:* from his right hand went a fiery law for them.' Here the 'ten thousands of saints' are ten thousands of *holy ones* or *holy myriads* (מרבבת קדש *mĕribboth kodesh*),' and this is but another name for *angels*. Thus also Ps. 68. 7, 8—17, 'O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, *even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*' This, taken in its connexions, is

CHAPTER XX.

AND God spake [a] all these words, saying,

2 [b] I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, [c] out of the house of bondage.

[a] Deut. 5. 22. [b] Lev. 26. 1, 13. Deut. 5. 6. Ps. 81. 10. Hos. 13. 4.

[c] ch. 13. 3.

a very remarkable passage, and that it has an intimate relation to the subject before, is obvious at once. The original for 'chariots' (רכב *rekeb*) is a collective singular for 'chariots,' and has an evident allusion to the same kind of symbolic scenery as that described in the vision of Ezekiel, where the Living Creatures or Cherubim are represented as forming a sort of *animated chariot* on which the Jehovah in the visible Shekinah was transported. The twenty thousand chariots of God, therefore, is but another name for twenty thousand angels supposed to be present at the giving of the Law from Sinai, on which, as on a living throne, the Glory was supported. This reminds us at once of the parallel language of the 18th Psalm, which is penned in the highest style of sanctified poetic afflatus, and which no doubt refers to the very scene at Sinai now under consideration. For although David is the speaker, yet he speaks in the person of the Jewish church, whose historical fortunes from the beginning are depicted in the boldest imagery of inspiration; Ps. 18. 7—11, 'Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he *rode upon a cherub and did fly:* yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.' That is, such dark, lowering, gloomy clouds as are usually surcharged with waters that in a time of tempest pour themselves out in gushing torrents. 'He rode upon a cherub;' that is, collectively, upon the Cherubim, constituting the Cherubic vehicle above mentioned. Finally we may advert to the testimony of Philo (Lib. de Decalogo), who says that 'there were present at the giving of the Law voices; visible, animated, and splendid flames of fire; *spirits* (πνεύματα); trumpets; and divine men running hither and thither to publish the Law.'

On the whole, from a collation of the various passages now adduced, we cannot but think the phraseology of the Apostles in respect to the event in question is explicable in entire consistency with the Mosaic narrative; and it only adds another proof of the vast importance of a correct view of the Shekinah to a right understanding of this and other portions of the Scriptures.

1. *And God spake all these words.* Heb. כל הדברים אלה *kol haddebarim elleh.* That is, the words or commandments following, called 'ten commandments (דברים *debarim, words*),' Ex. 34. 28. Deut. 4. 13, whence the title 'Decalogue,' or *ten words*, and 'the voice of words,' Heb. 12. 19. That 'words' and 'precepts,' or 'commandments,' are equivalent in Scripture usage, is evident from the following passages; Deut. 18. 19, 'I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my *words* in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall *command* him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my *words* which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him;'

i. e. whosoever will not hearken unto my precepts. Gal. 5. 14, 'For all the law is fulfilled *in one word;*' i. e. in one commandment, viz. that thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Est. 1. 12, 'But the queen Vashti refused to come at *the king's commandment* (Heb. בדבר חמלך *bidbar hammelek, at the king's word*).' Thus Mark, 7, 13, 'Making the *word* of God of none effect;' while Mat. 15. 6, 'Made the *commandment* of God of none effect.' It would not perhaps be easy, from the letter of the present narrative, to establish conclusively the fact that these words were spoken by the Most High in an articulate voice; as it might be maintained that they were spoken to Moses, and by him, as mediator, communicated to the people. But upon comparing other passages where this event is spoken of, the evidence, we think, is too strong to be resisted, that in delivering the Decalogue, God himself was the speaker. Thus, Deut. 5. 12, 13, 'And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.' Again, in ver. 32, 33, of the same chapter, the language forces upon us the same conclusion; 'For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is; or hath been heard like it? *Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire,* as thou hast heard, and live?' Add to this, that it is by no means certain, from an attentive survey of all the circumstances, that Moses was on the mount during the delivery of the Decalogue. It would seem then, that if the Law was spoken in an audible voice at all it must have been by God himself.

PREFACE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

2. *I am the Lord thy God*, &c. Heb. יהוה אלהיך *Yehovah Elohikha, Jehovah thine Elohim.* As these words contain nothing of a preceptive nature, they are undoubtedly to be considered as a kind of *preface* to the ensuing Commandments, embracing a declaration of the grounds on which their authority rests. The Most High in proclaiming his august name Jehovah, does thereby most imperatively assert his claim to the obedience of all rational creatures to whatever he should enjoin upon them. As 'Jehovah,' the self-existent, independent, eternal fountain of all being, he has of course the most absolute right to give law to the creatures he has formed. Such a right flows by self-evident sequence from the very relation of Creator and creature. He who gives being may give law; and no greater extrinsic sanction can be conceived to any code of laws than the supremacy, sovereignty, majesty, preeminence, and power of the source from which it emanates; and all this is implied in the very name 'Jehovah.' It is, consequently, a ground of obligation which applies to the whole human race, as well as to the nation of Israel; but in the accompanying title 'thy God,' there is a virtual restriction which brings home to the Israelites the import of the declaration with an emphasis and force which no other people could feel in the same degree. 'I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of Egypt,' are words containing a motive to obedience peculiar to the seed of Jacob, and one of which they were justly expected to feel the cogency. God was not only their God as Creator, but theirs by covenant relation, and by the signal deliverance wrought in their behalf. From whom then might he look for obedi

3 [d] Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

[d] Deut. 5. 7. & 6. 14. 2 Kings 17. 35. Jer. 25. 6. & 35. 15.

4 [e] Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness

[e] Lev. 26. 1. Deut. 4. 16. & 5. 8. & 27. 15. Ps. 97. 7.

ence, if not from them? If 'blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance,' how utterly inexcusable must be *their* disobedience to the mandates of their great Lawgiver? *We* have not indeed been delivered from the literal bondage of Egypt, but the spirit of the declaration reaches to us, if Christians, as redeemed by Christ from a bondage infinitely worse, and incorporated by faith into the true Israel of God, the spiritual seed of Abraham, and made heirs of all the blessings of the covenant of grace. Consequently, as the Lord is our God, we are bound by the same inviolable bonds of love and service as rested upon the seed of Israel according to the flesh. It is to be remarked, both here and elsewhere, throughout the Decalogue, that the address is made in the *singular* and not in the *plural* number. The design of this is, undoubtedly, to render the language in the highest degree emphatic. Every individual to whom this law comes is to consider himself as being as directly and personally addressed as though it had been spoken to him alone. 'Thou art the man.' In the present passage, as the assurance conveyed is intended to be appropriated by each individual to himself personally, it is full of condescending endearment; and the proper response to is furnished by the prophet, Zech. 13. 9, 'I will say it is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is *my* God;' not *our*.——¶ *Out of the house of bondage.* Heb. מבית עבדים *mibbëth abadim, out of the house of slaves;* i. e. out of the house where they themselves were slaves, and not the Egyptians; for although we cannot doubt that a large part of the Egyptian population was in a very degraded state, a state of vassalage and depression, yet that is not the allusion in the present passage. The words refer solely to the servile condition of the Israelites during their sojourn in the land of Egypt; and their wonderful deliverance thence by the outstretched arm of Jehovah, is very properly insisted upon as a ground for the cordial reception of the moral and ceremonial statutes which he was now imposing upon them. The motive to obedience involved in this miraculous interposition is still more emphatically dwelt upon Deut. 6. 20—24, 'And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bond-men in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: and the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.'

FIRST TABLE.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* Heb. לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני *lo yihyeh leka Elohim aharim al panai, there shall not be to thee other gods upon or against my face;* i. e. in my sight, boldly confronting me. Chal. 'There shall not be to thee another god besides me.' Gr

of any thing that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.

ουκ εσ νται σοι θεοι ἑτεροι πλην εμου, *there shall not be to thee other gods besides me.* But the Heb. עַל פָּנַי no where properly signifies *besides* or *except*, but always *before, in the presence of.* The scope of the precept is evidently to make known the true and only object of worship, and to forbid the annexing of any other object of religious reverence, respect, and homage to that which they were exclusively required to serve. It requires a conduct accordant with the declaration of Jehovah himself, Is. 42. 8, 'My glory will I not give to another.' The language does not necessarily imply the *reality*, the *positive existence*, of any such adventitious deities, but they were not to have any that were *so esteemed;* or as the apostle says, 1 Cor. 8. 5, 6, 'Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there are gods many and lords many); but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.' The precept does not seem to be directed primarily and immediately against that idolatry which consists in the use of fabricated images, although this is virtually forbidden, but against the putting any thing else in the place of the one living and true God. This may be done mentally as well as manually. There may be idolatry without idols; and the scope of this commandment seems to be mainly to forbid the making of any other objects, whether persons or things, real or imaginary, the objects of that supreme regard, reverence, esteem, affection, and obedience which we owe to God alone. As God is the fountain of happiness, and no intelligent being can be happy but through him, whoever seeks for supreme happiness in the creature instead of the Creator, is guilty of a violation of this command. Whatever it be that sets up a rival interest in our souls, absorbing that love and service which belongs to the true God, that is another God before him. Consequently, the proud man, who idolizes himself; the ambitious man, who pays homage to popular applause; the covetous man, who deifies his wealth; the sensualist, who lives to gratify his low appetites; the doting lover, husband, father, mother, who suffer their hearts to be supremely absorbed in the love of the creature, all come under the charge of transgressing the first commandment. In fact obedience to this precept would perfectly enthrone the Lord in our judgment and affections; and the strength of our love being thus given to him, we should love all others for his sake, and according to the measure that he had enjoined; whilst the violation of it destroys this subordination, and gives the creature the throne in our heart. With the utmost propriety therefore does it stand foremost in the tables of the Decalogue. It is the foundation of all the rest.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

4. *Thou shalt not make unto thee*, &c. The second commandment, comprised in v. 4—6, differs from the first by having respect to the *mode* of worship rather than the *object*. It consists of two parts, a *precept* and a *sanction*. The precept forbids the making of any sculptured or painted images of any object in heaven or earth, to be employed in religious worship. Nothing was to be attempted of the nature of a *likeness* or *sensible representation* of the invisible Deity, nothing constructed or portrayed which should stand as an *arbitrary symbol* of Jehovah, who was to be worshipped as a pure intelligent spirit, infinitely removed beyond the possibility of any material representation. Aware of the strong idolatrous tendency in human nature, and with a view to preclude its

breaking forth among the chosen people the Most High took especial care in his manifestation at Mount Sinai that the Israelites should see 'no manner of similitude,' nothing that could afterward be represented by an image. This is particularly adverted to in the subsequent account of that transaction, Deut. 4. 12—15—23, which forms the most suitable commentary on the precept before us; 'And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no *similitude;* only ye heard a voice. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; (for ye saw no manner of *similitude* on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire); lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a *graven image*, the *similitude* of any figure, the *likeness* of male or female. The *likeness* of any beast that is on the earth, the *likeness* of any winged fowl that flieth in the air. The *likeness* of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the *likeness* of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a *graven image*, or the *likeness* of any thing which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee.'

It is not to be supposed from the unqualified language of the prohibition, that sculpture or painting as branches of the fine arts are forbidden, although the Jews have for the most part been restrained by this commandment from indulging themselves to any extent in the mimetic arts. On this subject the language of Michaelis (Comment. on the Laws of Moses, Art. 250) is worthy of being quoted; 'I know not how it has happened that several writers, and among them some men of real learning, have persuaded themselves, or have, without inquiry, asserted, one after another, that the Israelites were absolutely prohibited from making, or having any image whatever, even although it had not the most distant reference to the Deity, or to religion. But let us consider the passages in which Moses prohibits images, in their connexion with the context, and see whether any such exposition ought to be given them: We find them (for I think it best to point them all out together) in Ex. 20. 4, 5. Deut. 4. 15—18; 27. 15. Now, from the connexion, it is evident, that images of the Deity are alone spoken of in all these passages; and the man, who, from the detached clause, *Thou shalt make to thyself no image*, concludes, that no image durst have been painted, or scrawled upon a rock, or cut in wood or stone, might, with equal reason, detach from their connexion the following words, which come immediately after the prohibition of images, *Thou shalt not raise thine eyes to heaven to behold the sun, moon, and stars*, and understand them as meant to imply, that we were never to raise our eyes to heaven and contemplate the sun, moon, and stars, but rather to walk upon all fours for ever.' The scope of the precept is evidently to forbid the use of those imaged and pictured likenesses *as representations of the invisible God.* The intention of the law is obvious from the reason assigned for it, viz., that they had seen 'no manner of similitude' when God appeared and delivered the Decalogue at Horeb. As he did not *appear* to them in any shape, so he ought not to be represented in any shape. But this reason does not hold against the making graven images of men, beasts, birds, fishes, or reptiles, when they were not intended as representations of God, or to be used as objects or means of worship. Accordingly Moses was expressly commanded to construct the figures of the Cherubim of the sculptured work for the Ark of the Covenant, Ex. 25. 18—20, and also the brazen serpent as an emblematic device to aid in the production of a salutary effect on the bodies of the bitten Israelites in the wilder-

ness, Num. 28. 8, 9. It is certain, moreover, that in the Temple of Solomon there was a great deal of sculptured work over the walls, as of flowers colocynths, palm-trees, cherubim, &c., and the brazen sea, it is well known rested upon twelve brazen oxen. In neither of these cases was there any infraction of the second commandment, because the *design* of these images did not come within the scope of its prohibition. But the making of the golden calf by the Israelites in the wilderness was in the most direct contravention of the letter and spirit of this precept, although professedly set up in honor of the true God, and was what the Scriptures expressly call *idolatry*, Acts, 7. 41, 'They made a calf in those days and offered sacrifice unto the *idol* (τῳ εἰδωλῳ).' 1 Cor. 10. 7, 'Neither be ye *idolaters* as some of them were; as it is written, The people sat down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play.' In like manner when Jeroboam set up his calves of gold and proclaimed to the people, 'Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of Egypt,' he was guilty of the very sin forbidden in the second commandment. That this was the idolatry condemned in this commandment, viz., worshipping the images of the true God, and not the worship of a *false* god, which is more especially pointed at in the first, is evident from this, that his sin is said to be *less* than the sin of worshipping the image of Baal, 1 Kings, 16. 31, where we read that 'it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for Ahab to walk in the sins of Jeroboam that he went and served Baal and worshipped him;' and so in the language of the first commandment, 'had another god before Jehovah,' which Jeroboam had not, because he worshipped his idols *as images of the true God*. This we suppose to be a leading distinction between the first and second precept of the law. But the spiritual import of this commandment reaches much farther. It goes unequivocally to forbid all superstitious usages, all mere human inventions, in the matter of divine worship. The annexing of additions of our own to the institutions of heaven under the pretext of their being *significant ceremonies* calculated to excite devotion or better to promote the ends of worship, is nothing short of a bold innovation upon the prescribed worship of God. Deut. 12. 30, 'What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not *add* thereto, nor *diminish* from it.' This principle accordingly condemns all such commanded practices as signing with the cross in baptism, kneeling at the sacrament, erecting altars in churches, bowing at the name of Jesus, and other things of like nature, for which the Scriptures contain no express warrant. The bare *adoption* of such usages no doubt trenches in some degree upon the spirit of this commandment; but to *insist* upon them as terms of communion is nothing short of a downright invasion of the prerogative of the divine Lawgiver, and must incur his marked displeasure. In the minor *circumstances* of religious worship no doubt many things are left to be regulated by the dictates of human discretion, and in these the apostolic rule, 'let every thing be done decently and in order,' will always be a sufficient guide; but whenever this rule is made a plea for *imposing* things uncommanded, then a plain infraction is made upon the spirit of this precept.——¶ *Graven image.* Heb. פֶּסֶל *pesel, sculptile, any thing cut, graven, or carved, a statue,* from the root פָּסַל *pasal, to hew, to chip, to sculpture,* whether wood or stone. Gr. εἰδωλον, *an idol.* Chal. 'An image.' ——¶ *Likeness.* Heb. תְּמוּנָה *temunah, likeness, similitude.* The term is quite general in its import, carrying with it mainly the idea of *resemblance*, but whether this resemblance is the result of configuration or delineation is not determined by the word alone. As the previous term פֶּסֶל *pesel*, more strictly

5 [f]Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God *am* a [g]jealous God, [h]visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

[f] ch. 23. 24. Josh. 23. 7. 2 Kings 17. 35. Isai. 44. 15, 19. [g] ch. 34. 14. Deut. 4. 24. & 6. 15. Josh. 24. 19. Neh. 1. 2.

[h] ch. 34. 7. Lev. 20. 5. & 26. 39, 40. Numb. 14. 18, 33. 1 Kings 21. 29. Job 5. 4. & 21. 19. Ps. 79. 8. & 109. 4. Isai. 14. 20, 21. & 65. 6, 7. Jer. 2. 9. & 32. 18.

denotes *statuary*, it will no doubt be proper here to understand תמונה *temunah* of any kind of *pictorial representation* whether of real or fancied objects, which might serve as the instruments of worship.

5. *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them.* Heb. לא תשתחוה להם *lo tishtahaveh lahem, shalt not do obeisance to them.* Gr. *ου προσκυνησεις αυτοις, shall not worship them,* a term applied to those bodily gestures, such as bowing, kneeling, falling prostrate, &c., which are used as tokens of special reverence and respect. See Note on Gen. 18. 2. Though they might not *make* nor *have* such images themselves or in their own country, yet possibly they might see them in passing through other lands, in which case they were required carefully to refrain from bowing down to them, or using any gesture which might be construed into an act of religious reverence, or as in any degree countenancing a practice so expressly forbidden.—¶ *Nor serve them.* Heb. תעבדם *taobdem.* Gr. *μη λατρευσεις αυτοις, nor do homage to them.* If they were forbidden to *make* or to *acknowledge* by the most casual outward gesture any such images, much less were they to go so far as to *serve* them, or unite with those that did, either by *offering sacrifice, burning incense, pouring out libations, making vows, building altars, consecrating temples,* or any other act of equivalent import. The spirit of this second commandment, like that of the whole Decalogue, is plainly 'exceeding broad.' It is undoubtedly implied that in paying our devotion to the true God we are not to employ any image or likeness for the purpose of directing, exciting, or assisting that devotion. Though it were worship designed to terminate in God, yet its being offered through such a medium would divest it of all its acceptableness in his sight. Guided solely by the dictates of our erring reason, we might suppose that the aid of bodily sense might be called in to assist our mental vision, and that the use of images, paintings, crucifixes, and other outward symbols might at least be harmless, if not positively beneficial in refreshing the memory and quickening our devotions. But God knows the downward and deteriorating tendency of our nature even in its best estate, and he sees that the employment of outward symbols of worship would gradually tend to lower the standard of pious feeling and finally to withdraw the mind from the ultimate spiritual object, and fix it upon the gross sensible medium. We have only to look at the history of the Greek and Latin churches for an abundant confirmation of this view of the subject. How palpable is it that the standard of a pure and spiritual worship is there most sadly and fearfully degraded? that the spirit of devotion has been lost in that of downright idolatry? From crosses and relics they proceeded to images and pictures, not only of God and Christ, and the Holy Ghost, but of the virgin and of saints and martyrs without number; until those beings, and the paintings or carvings which represented them, originally designed as mere intercessors and aids to devotion, became, at least to the more ignorant, actual objects of worship. Now and then an individual may perhaps be found exhibiting a depth and

fervor of pious feeling that has resisted all these untoward influences. But in the general, what superstition, what profanation, what mockery, under the name of worship there prevail? Forgiveness of sin by human authority, the withholding the Bible from the people, and the grossest immorality among large portions of the priesthood are among the fruits known and read of all men, of the practical violation of the second commandment.——¶ *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God*, &c. We have thus far considered the *precept* of the Second Commandment; the words before us bring us to its *sanction*. This is drawn from the nature of God, and the words very strikingly exhibit the peculiar feeling with which Jehovah regards all *rivalry* in the affections and homage of his subjects. This feeling is here called 'jealousy,' implying a peculiar *sensitiveness* to every thing that threatens to trench upon the honor, reverence, and esteem that he knows to be due to himself. The term will appear still more significant if it be borne in mind that *idolatry* in the Scriptures is frequently spoken of as *spiritual adultery*, and as 'jealousy is the rage of a man,' so nothing can more fitly express the divine indignation against this sin than the term in question. Those sentiments therefore which are naturally awakened by the infidelity and treachery of an espoused wife towards her husband are strongly appealed to by the use of this language.——¶ *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers*, &c. 'It is universally believed that children suffer for the iniquities of their ancestors, through many generations. 'I wonder why Tamban's son was born a cripple?'—'You wonder! why, that is a strange thing; have you not heard what a vile man his grandfather was?' 'Have you heard that Valen has had a son, and that he is born blind?'—'I did not hear of it, but this is another proof of the sins of a former birth.' 'What a wicked wretch that Venāsi is! alas for his posterity, great will be their sufferings.' 'Evil one, why are you going on in this way; have you no pity for your seed?' 'Alas! alas! I am now suffering for the sins of my fathers.' When men enjoy many blessings, it is common to say of them, 'Yes, yes, they are enjoying the good deeds of their fathers.' 'The prosperity of my house arises from the virtues of my forefathers.' In the Scanda Purāna it is recorded, 'The soul is subject to births, deaths, and sufferings. It may be born on the earth, or in the sea. It may also appear in ether, fire, or air. Souls may be born as men, as beasts or birds, as grass or trees, as mountains or gods.' By these we are reminded of the question, 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents.' *Roberts*. To *visit* iniquity is to *punish* it; and we have here the announcement of a general principle of the divine administration or an established ordering of providence, viz., that the effects both of obedience and disobedience, or blessings and curses, remain for a long time after the original actors are no more. Universal history and experience clearly go to show that this is a distinguishing character of the divine economy, and the sentence is shielded from all charge of injustice by the terms in which it is couched—'unto the third and fourth generation of them that *hate* me;' from which it is obvious that the children were not to be thus punished for the sins of their fathers *irrespective* of their own conduct and deserts. The tokens of the divine displeasure were to flow along the line of those who continued the *haters* of God, as all idolaters are plainly considered by implication to be. This sense of the passage is distinctly recognized in the Chal. version; 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the transgressing children, unto the third

6 And [i] shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

[i] ch. 34. 7. Deut. 7. 9. Ps. 89. 34. Rom. 11. 28.

7 [k] Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD [l] will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

[k] ch. 23. 1. Lev. 19. 12. Deut. 5. 11. Ps. 15. 4. Matt. 5. 33. [l] Mic. 6. 11.

and fourth generation, of those who hate me, when the children follow the iniquities of the fathers.' This natural and easy construction removes any apparent discrepancy between the rule of procedure here stated and that affirmed, Ezek. 18. 20, 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son;' for the language of the prophet is to be understood of the son who does *not* tread in the steps of his wicked father; whereas the threatening in this precept respects those children who *do* follow the example of their evil parents. This is evident from their being said to be of those that *hate* God. The words as originally spoken undoubtedly had a primary reference to the sin of idolatry, but it cannot be doubted that they announce a general principle, to wit, that the iniquities and vices of men are punished in their posterity; not by any arbitrary enactment, but in virtue of that constitution of things which God has adopted, and so framed, that children cannot well avoid suffering in this world in consequence of the misdeeds of their parents. From the circumstances in which they are placed and the influences that bear upon them, it is almost inevitable that they should fall into the same sinful courses with their fathers, and if so, they must necessarily experience the same punishments. It is to be observed, however, that this threatening has respect mainly to the *temporal* effects of sin, to its penal consequences in the present life, and is not to be considered as affecting the eternal salvation of individuals, any farther than as their final condition depends upon their personal conduct in this world. It is therefore an ordination or arrangement of entire equity, and one too which at the same time makes a strong appeal to the parental feelings; as it represents the destinies of their descendants, for weal or woe, as lodged in a great measure in their hands.

6. *Shewing mercy unto thousands*, &c. So much more abundant is the Lord in mercy than in wrath, so much more congenial to his nature is the exercise of loving-kindness than punitive displeasure, that while he *punishes* to the third and fourth generation, he *shews mercy* to the thousandth. This is abundantly exemplified in the history of the posterity of Abraham, who were destined, on account of the distinguished virtues of their progenitor, to be the most illustrious nation on earth at the distance of several thousand years from his time.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

7. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Heb. לֹא תִשָּׂא—*lo tissa—lashshav, thou shalt not take up* (i. e. upon thy lips) *the name of the Lord thy God to vanity, or falsehood.* Vulg. Non assumes, *thou shalt not assume.* The name of God signifies primarily any word or expression which denotes God; any title or epithet which goes to distinguish him from all other beings. Of these the most peculiar and pregnant is perhaps the title 'Jehovah,' implying his absolute, eternal, and immutable existence. But besides this, he is denoted also by many other appellations of distinctive purport, such as 'God,' 'the Lord' 'the Almighty,' 'the Most High,' 'the Father,' 'the Creator,' 'the Holy One of Israel,' &c.,

some expressing what he is in himself, and some his relations to his creatures. But the 'name' of God is, from Scriptural usage, generally and properly understood in a somewhat wider sense, *of every thing by which he makes himself known*, and so including not only his various titles, but also his attributes, ordinances, word, and works. That the leading idea of 'taking the name of God' in this place is *swearing* by it, is universally conceded, and is confirmed by the three ancient versions, the Chal., the Syr., and the Arab., all which render, 'Thou shalt not swear falsely by the name of the Lord thy God.' The original term שׁוא *shav* signifies both *what is false* and *what is vain*, and as both senses are undoubtedly to be included in the term, it lays a foundation for a twofold view of the prohibition; forbidding (1) All *false* swearing, all perjury, all use of the holy name of God which should go to make him witness to a lie; (2) All *vain*, *light*, *frivolous* swearing, including all cursing and swearing in common conversation, all blasphemy, and all rash, thoughtless, irreverent use of the titles and attributes of Jehovah. As a matter of course, the worshippers of the Most High must have frequent occasion to mention his name, and the scope of this commandment is to inculcate the utmost reverence of that holy name which is but a symbol of every idea that can awaken awe, adoration, fear, and homage, in the bosoms of men or angels. If we were to indicate the point of the prohibition by specifying the directly opposite duty, it would be by adducing the words of the prophet, Is. 8. 13, '*Sanctify* the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear and your dread.' In perfect consistency, however, with the tenor of this precept, appeals may be made to God, on suitable occasions, in the form of judicial oaths taken in confirmation of the truth of our statements. The example of Christ, and the declarations of the apostles, clearly intimate the intrinsic lawfulness of oaths, and the scope of the third commandment is primarily to inculcate a due degree of reverence in the use of such an invocation of the Deity. An oath is, in fact, an act of religious worship, in which God is solemnly called upon to witness the truth of the affirmations made, and to act as punisher of the crime if any perjury is committed. It imports that we acknowledge him to be the infallible searcher of hearts, and the powerful and stern avenger of all falsehood, fraud, and deceit in such a solemn transaction; and no inference can be plainer than that it is the height of irreligion and profanity to interpose that awful name in attestation of any thing that is false, fraudulent, or hypocritical. The rule by which such an act is to be governed is expressly given, Jer. 4. 2, 'Thou shalt swear in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness,' and any deviation from this is an infraction of the precept before us, and though often accounted a trivial offence among men, yet there is scarcely a more atrocious or provoking crime in the sight of the infinitely true, and pure, and upright Jehovah. The same general remarks apply also to vows and voluntary engagements, which we assume upon ourselves and solemnly promise to fulfil. To invoke the holy name of God on such occasions, to appeal to him as the omniscient voucher of our sincerity, and then to neglect, slight, or violate the obligations we have incurred is but an impious mockery of the majesty of Jehovah, which he will not fail to punish.

But it is, perhaps, in common discourse that this command is most frequently and flagrantly disregarded. To say nothing of downright malignant blasphemy, which happily is rare in a land of Bibles and churches, and the grosser imprecations which often assail the ear from profane and impious lips,

the practice of interlarding our conversation with the words 'God,' 'Lord,' 'Christ,' or the expressions 'the Lord knows,' 'heaven help me,' without necessity, seriousness, or reverence, involves a measure of the guilt of transgressing the third commandment. Nor can it be denied that *profane writing* is open to the same charge with *profane speaking*. In the statement of matters of fact by way of testimony, the use of irreverent expressions may indeed be allowable, but nothing is more common than for writers of fiction to put the most revolting oaths into the mouths of their various personages; and this they seem to think harmless, provided they contrive to mask the grossness of the language by dashes and asterisks. But wherein this differs from any other profaneness, except in being more deliberate, and more pernicious in the way of example, it is not easy to see. To give currency to such profane modes of speech, under pretence of their being necessary to the faithful portraiture of character and manners, incurs we think little less guilt than that of originally uttering them. The exhibition of *such* manners, even by the greatest moral painter, can well be dispensed with.

In fine, the rule of safety in this matter is that laid down by our Lord in his commentary on the rabbinical precepts, Mat. 5. 33—37, 'Again ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King: neither shalt thou swear by thine head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.'——¶ *The Lord will not hold him guiltless*, &c. Heb. לֹא יְנַקֶּה *lo yenakkeh, will not pronounce pure, innocent, or clear; will not acquit.* Gr. ου μη καθαριζη, *will not cleanse;* i. e. *will not declare clean, will not absolve.* He will not let him go unpunished. It is an instance of the idiom, by no means infrequent in Hebrew, by which a negative mode of expression couches under it a strongly affirmative idea. We have then in these words a virtual assurance from Jehovah himself that this precept cannot be disregarded with impunity. Men may not discover, or they may neglect to punish, its violations, and even the hardened conscience of the sinner may fail to rebuke him on account of it; but let it not be forgotten, that God will surely detect and punish the insult thus put upon his great and glorious name. The words of inspiration clearly portray the character of those who trangress this commandment; Ps. 139. 20, 'Thine *enemies* take thy name in vain.' The profane swearer is the open and avowed *enemy* of the high and holy God, and it is no more certain that there will be a judgment seat, before which the bold transgressor must appear, than it is that he will be called to an account for his profane trifling with the most sacred things in the universe; 'And I will come near to you to judgment: and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, *and against false swearers*, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.' Mal. 3. 5 The remarkable passage Josh. 9. 19, 20, shows in what light the children of Israel regarded the breach of their plighted faith even to a portion of the devoted nations of Canaan; 'But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. This will we do to them; we will even let them live, *lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware*

8 [m] Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.

[m] ch. 31. 13. 14. Lev. 19. 3, 30. & 26. 2. Deut. 5. 12.

9 [n] Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

[n] ch. 23. 12. & 31. 15. & 34. 21. Lev. 23, 3. Ezek. 20. 12. Luke 13. 14.

unto them.' Nor can we forbear in this connexion to advert to the fact, that the sin in question has often been followed by sudden and fearful marks of divine retribution, even in the present world. However it be accounted for, certain it is that in more than one well-attested instance men have fallen dead in the midst of the most horrid imprecations, as if God had taken them at their word in calling upon him to seal their perdition. We do not say that such cases are to be regarded as miraculous. It is very possible that the physical effects, caused by an unnatural degree of excitement of the passions, and the sudden incursion of a violent pang or panic of conscience may have been sufficient to account for the result. Still such cases should be looked upon as solemn warnings; since it may be no less a real visitation of divine wrath for being made by the agency of natural laws acting upon the nervous system. It is to be considered also, that as this is a sin which aims perhaps more *directly* than any other at God; one in which the inward spirit of the offender comes more immediately in collision with the spirit of God; it is not perhaps to be wondered at that he should occasionally come out in more marked judgment against it. But however it be understood, this solemn denunciation of the Almighty ought to be to this commandment what the restraining limits were around the hallowed base of Sinai, a sacred fence to guard it from unhallowed violation.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

8. *Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.* Heb. זכור את יום השבת *zakor eth yom hashshabboth, remember the day of cessation, or rest.* On the import of the original word for 'Sabbath,' and on the origin, nature, and end of the institution in general, see Note on Gen. 2. 3. The term 'remember' in this connexion (זכור *zakor*), implies more than the mere mental act of memory, as it is the only Hebrew word equivalent to our *celebrate* or *commemorate*, importing that it was to be *remembered by appropriate observances.* If therefore the clause were to be rendered, 'Remember the sabbath day by way of commemoration or celebration,' it would bring us still nearer to its genuine purport. Thus Ex. 13. 3, 'Moses said unto the people, *Remember* (זכור *zakor*) this day, in which ye came out from Egypt,' where see Note. But how was it to be remembered? Not simply by mental reminiscence, but by special observance; for it is added, 'There shall no unleavened bread be eaten.' It could not be adequately remembered without being kept in the manner prescribed. So also Ex. 12. 14, 'This day shall be unto you for a *memorial* (זכרון *zikkaron*);' and then the manner in which the precept should be complied with is immediately described, 'ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.' So in the present case, the Sabbath was to be *remembered by practical acknowledgment* as well as by bearing in mind, with special care, the stated season of its occurrence, and by cherishing the recollection of its early appointment as a memorial of God's rest at the close of the work of creation. Accordingly, in the parallel passage, Deut. 5. 12, the language is not '*remember* the sabbath to sanctify it,' but '*keep* the sabbath day,' no doubt with the design to intimate that these two terms in this connexion were equivalent. Thus too we learn, from Lev. 23. 3, that on the

sabbath there was to be *a holy convocation*, or an assembly of the people, at the tabernacle, as afterwards at the temple, for the public worship of God, as if this were the appropriate mode of *remembering* the sabbath; 'Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, *an holy convocation;* ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.' But in addition to the 'holy convocation,' the Israelites were required to offer a greater number of sacrifices on that than on other days; Numb. 28. 9, 10, and we cannot question that these various services were understood to enter essentially into the due observance of this hallowed season. It consequently leads us to the inevitable inference, that the sabbath is not properly or adequately kept unless it be distinguished from other days by being in a special manner *devoted to the duties of public as well as private worship.*

It is doubtless true that this commandment is not so purely *moral* or *self-enforced* in its own nature as the rest. Although the consecration of a certain portion of our time to the immediate service of God may perhaps be admitted to be of *moral obligation*, yet the exact proportion, as well as the particular day, may be considered as of *positive institution*, and therefore somewhat more of a *Jewish* aspect is given to this precept than to either of the others. For this reason some in all periods of the church have been led to question whether it is properly to be considered as still remaining in force under the Christian dispensation, particularly as no express mention is made of it in the New Testament. But as it was in its substantial features no doubt in existence long before the period of the Jewish economy, as it forms an integral part of that collection of precepts which was spoken from heaven by the voice of God, and was afterwards written by the finger of God on the tables of stone, it would not be easy to offer a stronger argument in proof of the perpetuity of its obligation. Not doubting, therefore, that an institution which was binding *before* the law is equally binding *after* it, unless distinctly repealed, we have only to remark, that the particular day in the week is not specified; it is, 'remember the sabbath day,'—not the 'seventh day'—'to keep it holy.' All that the commandment expressly requires is, to observe a day of sacred rest after every six days of labor. The seventh day indeed is to be kept holy, but not a word is here said as to the point from which the reckoning is to begin. The 'seventh day' is not so much the seventh according to any particular method of computing the septenary cycle, as in reference to the six working days before-mentioned; every seventh day in rotation after six of labor. The Jewish sabbath was kept on our Saturday, but we act equally in accordance with the spirit and the letter of this commandment by keeping it on Sunday; and as this was the day on which our Lord arose from the dead, it has come to be appropriately designated as 'the Lord's day,' and as such has been observed as the Christian sabbath from the earliest periods of the church.——

¶ *To keep it holy.* Heb. לקדשׁו *lekaddesho, to sanctify it.* On the import of this term see Note on Gen. 2. 3.

9. *Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work.* Heb. כל מלאכתך *kol melakteka, all thy business* or *servile work.* It comes from the ancient root לאך *laak, to send, to depute,* from which also comes מלאך *malak, a messenger,* and properly signifies all that varied service and ministry to the performance of which servants were *sent* or *despatched*, and about which they were employed. It plainly refers to the daily routine of ordinary secular employments, all which were to be diligently pursued on the six working days, and religiously suspended on the sev

10 But the [b] seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, [p] nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:
11 For [q] *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

[b] Gen. 2. 2, 3. ch. 16. 26. & 31. 15. [p] Neh. 13. 16, 17, 18, 19.

[q] Gen. 2. 2.

enth or day of rest. As the words belong to the first table, which is not designed to teach us our duties to ourselves or our neighbors, but to God, they are not in their intrinsic import so strictly *preceptive* or *imperative*, as *permissive*. Though they do in their spirit inculcate the duty of active and exemplary diligence in the season of it, yet their primary drift is, undoubtedly, *to define that season;* to teach us within what bounds our labor is to be circumscribed, in contradistinction to the allotted time of rest. In making this disposal of time, however, the Most High of course reserved to himself the right of occasionally setting apart some one or more of those six days for religious services, and we are not to consider it as any infringement upon the original precept if extraordinary seasons of fasting, thanksgiving, and worship should occasionally be set apart in like manner, by civil or ecclesiastical authority.

10. *The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.* Heb. שבת ליהוה אלהיך *shabboth laihovah Elohi'ka, a sabbath to Jehovah thy God.* That is, the sabbath appointed by and consecrated to the Lord thy God; the sabbath in which God asserts a special interest, which he peculiarly claims as his own, and which we cannot refuse to sanctify to him without being guilty of a kind of sacrilege, and appropriating to ourselves what properly belongs to another. In accordance with this phraseology we find it said, Lev. 26. 2, 'Ye shall keep *my* sabbath.' Is. 56. 4, 'For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep *my* sabbaths, and choose the things that please me,' &c. ¶ *In it thou shalt not do any work*, &c. That is, no secular or servile work, nothing pertaining to a mere worldly calling. Works of piety, necessity, and charity, are of course excepted, as these consist entirely with the spirit of that day, as a day of holy rest; for 'the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.' It is obvious, however, that all works of a different character are to be excluded from the hallowed hours of the sabbath, and our affairs should be previously so arranged, that the sacred duties of the Lord's day may be interrupted as little as possible; nor should any thing be considered as a work of necessity on that day, which can be done *before* the sabbath, or delayed till *after* it. All buying and selling, paying wages, settling accounts, gathering harvests, clearing out of vessels from port, making up, sorting, or transporting of mails, writing letters of business or amusement, reading books, papers, or pamphlets on ordinary subjects, trifling visits, journies, excursions, or conversation on topics merely secular, are inconsistent with 'keeping a day holy unto the Lord.' ¶ *Thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant*, &c. This part of the precept goes not only to extend the obligation, but also to secure the privileges of the sabbath to every class and condition of men. The wife indeed is not mentioned, because she is supposed to be one with the husband, and as cooperating with him or

course in carrying into execution every commandment of God. But the rest of the family, sons and daughters, male and female servants, are specified in such a way as to throw upon heads of families the responsibility of uniting *all* their household establishment in the due observance of the day. Whatever relief, refreshment, or rest may be intended to be afforded by the institution, servants and even cattle are to be sacredly considered as entitled to its merciful provisions. It is indeed the destiny of man that he should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, but the sabbath is graciously bestowed upon him as a relief to that destiny. His mental energy and bodily health are to be renewed by its leisure; and God who has thus bestowed upon man the substantial blessing of a periodical cessation from toil, has decreed the same privilege to the menial classes and the inferior animals. The rest therefore so kindly provided by the Creator for servants and cattle ought not to be unnecessarily broken. The domestic, on that day, should be released, as far as possible, from his ordinary labors, and the beast which has served us faithfully during the week, should not be deprived of his share of the general repose. Were this law but duly observed, the servants in many families would be spared that labor on the sabbath which now too often prevents their attending to any religious duty. Nor would the use of horses for travelling so extensively disgrace our own and other Christian lands. Many a driver and ostler, who knows no cessation from his daily task, would be found frequenting the place of worship; and many a poor animal, which now pants under the lash of the sabbath, would then be permitted to recover strength for the ensuing six days of inevitable labor.——¶ *Nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.* That is, within thy cities, as explained in the Note on Gen. 22. 17. Gr. ὁ προσηλυτος ὁ παροικων εν σοι, *the proselyte dwelling among thee.* Even the strangers who might be resident among the Israelites, are here required to acknowledge the authority of the law sanctifying the sabbath day; which is in other words recognising the *right* of the Israelites to demand that strangers should pay a reverent respect to the institutions, civil and religious, of the people among whom they sojourned. For otherwise how could this charge be embraced in the duty of the Israelites? But the thing was in itself in the highest degree reasonable and proper. If such a stranger were a proselyte of the class called *proselytes of righteousness or justice*, it was of course incumbent upon him to conform to all the observances of the Hebrews. If he were merely a *proselyte of the gate*, who had renounced idolatry without receiving circumcision, still it was fitting that he should rest from his labors on the sabbath day, and not, by engaging in them, disturb those who were desirous at that time of quietly devoting themselves to the duties of public and private worship. It was doing as he would be done by in similar circumstances.

11. *For in six days the Lord made*, &c. We are here reminded of the origin of the sabbath, by way of enforcing its observance by an appropriate sanction. It was designed for a memorial of the creation of the world, and therefore to be observed to the glory of the Creator who made heaven and earth. All the perfections of the Godhead, accordingly, which are so conspicuously displayed in the wondrous fabric of creation, and in that providence by which it is upheld and governed, should be devoutly contemplated and adored on that solemn day. Upon comparing this passage with Deut. 5. 15, a different reason seems to be given for the observance of the sabbath; 'And remember that thou wast a

12 ¶ r Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

r ch. 23. 26. Lev. 19. 3. Deut. 5. 16. Jer. 35. 7, 18, 19. Matt. 15. 4. & 19. 19. Mark 7. 10. & 10. 19. Luke 18. 20. Ephes. 6. 2.

servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.' But the two are by no means inconsistent with each other: The first, taken from the creation, was well known and continued valid of course; but the second, taken from the deliverance from Egypt, was merely superadded to the first in order to give more force to the sense of obligation by coupling it with the memory of an important event in their national history. It would seem too that the allusion in the latter case had special respect to that clause of the precept which enjoins the duty of masters in regard to their servants. While the Israelites were in Egypt in a state of slavery they were no doubt restricted by their despotic oppressors from observing the sabbath as they otherwise would. But now when set at liberty and permitted to serve God according to the precepts of their religion, he justly expected that they should make a right use of their liberty, and deal more mercifully with their servants than the Egyptians had dealt with them; and particularly that they should permit them to rest one day in seven, that is, as often as they did themselves.

For a more extended and elaborate view of the origin, design, obligation, and due observance of the holy sabbath, the reader is referred to Edwards' and Dwight's Theology, and to the Treatises of Bp. Wilson, Gurney, Humphrey, Agnew, Waterbury, and Kingsbury, in which is accumulated an immense fund of argumentative and practical matter relative to this divine institution.

SECOND TABLE.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

12. *Honor thy father and thy mother*, &c. Heb. כבד *kabēd*, from כבד *kabad*, *to be heavy*; thence applied to *weight of character, dignity*, or what entitles one to *respect, honor, distinguished esteem*. Accordingly in the Piel conjugation it signifies *to regard, treat*, or *practically declare one as worthy of honor*. It is directly opposed to the word קלל *kalal, to make light of, to set light by, to account mean, vile, or worthless*. Accordingly we find this term employed to signify a conduct the reverse of that enjoined in this precept; as Deut. 27. 16, 'Cursed be he that *setteth light by* (מקלה *mukleh*) his father or his mother.' Ezek. 22. 7, 'In thee have they *set light by* (הקלו *hēkallu*) father and mother.' From the same root כבד *kabad*, comes the original word for *glory*, כבוד *kabod*, whence the Apostle has, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 'Weight of glory,' and Peter, 2 Pet. 2. 10, denominates magistrates δόξαι, *glories*, from the *weight of character* attached to them. Comp. Note on Gen. 31. 1. In Lev. 19. 3, and Deut. 5. 16, the word ירא *yara, to fear, to reverence* is substituted, but obviously with the same import. The grand duty here inculcated is that of *filial piety*, embracing that entire class of duties which children owe to their parents. The foundation of these duties is laid in the nature of the relation which parents and children sustain to each other, and they are so obvious that children themselves, even at a very tender age, are capable of feeling deeply their obligation. Parents are under God the immediate authors of the being of chil-

dren. It is to their parents that they owe their preservation, sustentation, and protection during that helpless period in which they are utterly incapable of taking care of themselves. The hearts of parents are full of the kindest affection—love, tender solicitude, pity, sympathy, benevolence—towards their children, affections which show themselves in the most painful exertions, toils, watchings, privations, sacrifices of comfort and ease, of which human nature is capable. They willingly undergo hardship, encounter peril, incur expense, and jeopard their lives and their health to promote the welfare of their offspring. And children, when they are more advanced in age, come of course into the full participation of all the temporal advantages of their parents' station in life, whether of wealth, honor, or respectability. Indeed it is in great measure for their children that parents live and labor in the world.

For these and similar reasons parents most justly claim what the great Parent of all here claims for them. And as they have affections and perform actions nearly akin to those of God towards us, they may properly be deemed in a sense his representatives, the lively images of him in whom we live and move and have our being, and on that account entitled to a special veneration from their children. God himself, we know, in order to endear himself to our hearts, and to win more effectually our obedience, assumes the title of *Father*, and on this ground lays a special claim to our respect; 'If I be a father, where is mine honor?' And it is remarkable that while the duties owed to other men are termed justice, or charity, or courtesy, or liberality, or gratitude, those due to parents in most languages are comprised under the title of *piety*, implying something *divine* in the objects of them. Who indeed does not feel that it is something *more* than injustice to wrong a parent; that it is *more* than uncharitableness to refuse them succor or relief; that it is *more* than incivility to be unkind to them; that it is *more* than sordid avarice to withhold aid from their necessities? Who is not prompted at once to brand such conduct as *impiety?* Indeed the language of inspiration expressly confirms this view of the subject, 1 Tim. 5. 4, 'If any widow have children or nephews (i. e. grandchildren) let them learn first *to show piety* (*ευσεβειν*) at home, and to requite their parents; for that is good and acceptable before God;' where the term employed is the proper one for expressing *piety* towards God.

As to the precise import of the precept, it will perhaps be more distinctly gathered from the several parallel injunctions scattered through the Old and New Testament; 'Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbath; I am the Lord your God.' 'My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.' 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.' 'Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.' In these passages the phraseology is so varied, as to make it evident that the precept implies not only an abstract sentiment, a cordial inward respect and esteem for their persons, but also obedience to their lawful commands, submission to their rebukes, instructions, and corrections, deference to their counsels, and sincere endeavors to promote their comfort, particularly in old age, when by affording them a maintenance we can in some measure requite their care of our infancy and childhood. If such are the duties of children, let parents, on the other hand, remember that correspondent duties rest upon them. Though children are not absolved from the obligation of this commandment by the misconduct of their parents, yet in the nature of things it is impossible that they should yield the same hearty

respect and veneration to the unworthy as to the worthy, nor does God require a child to pay an *irrational* honor to his parents. If his parents are atheists, he cannot honor them as Christians. If they are prayerless and profane, he cannot honor them as religious. If they are worldly, avaricious, overreaching, unscrupulous as to veracity and honest dealing, he cannot honor them as exemplary, upright, conscientious, and spiritually minded. If they are intemperate and abandoned he cannot honor them as sober and virtuous, nor truly speak of them as such. But a child is obliged to think *as well as he can* of his parents, and to conceal their faults, unless the good of society obviously requires their exposure. He is to obey them in all things where their commands do not come in conflict with those of God. In that case children are not at liberty to obey; they are under an antecedent obligation; they are imperiously bound by their duty to God to adhere to truth, to honesty, to justice. But in all such cases there is need of the utmost caution, and of a positive assurance that the thing declined is as clearly forbidden by God as obedience to parents is commanded by him. Otherwise children cannot be warranted in refusing to obey parental injunctions.

That thy days may be long in the land, &c. Heb. למען יארכין *lemăan yäarikun, that they may prolong.* That is, as Leclerc and some others understand it, that thy father and mother, by their prayers in thy behalf, by the blessings of heaven which they shall invoke, may be the means of prolonging thy days upon the land where thou dwellest. But the idiom of the Hebrew tongue is such that we are not required to interpret the word 'they' of parents, and from the illustration which we have given of this usage of speech in the Note on Gen. 16. 14, it will be evident that our translation presents the right rendering, 'that thy days may be prolonged,' following herein the Gr. *ινα μακροχρονιος γενη επι της γης της αγαθης, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the good land*, &c., where by the way, we may remark that *αγαθης good* is gratuitously inserted, but probably with a view to indicate that they understood the word 'land' of the *land of promise*, instead of 'earth' as it is frequently rendered. A similar phraseology occurs Job, 4. 19, 'Which are crushed before the moth;' Heb. They crush them before the moth. Ch. 7. 3, 'Wearisome nights are appointed to me;' Heb. They appoint to me wearisome nights. So in the New Testament, Luke 16. 9, 'That they may receive you into everlasting habitations;' i. e. that ye may be received. The parallel promise in Deut. 5. 16, has a slight additional clause, 'That thy days may be prolonged, *and that it may go well with thee*, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,' and this sense of the promise is confirmed by the apostle's citation, Eph. 6. 3, 'That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.' In other cases the prolonging of the days is attributed directly and actively to the person of whose conduct it is the result. Thus Deut. 22. 7, 'But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and *that thou mayest prolong thy days.*' This commandment is indeed cited by the apostle as the first that has a special promise annexed to it—for the promise added to the second commandment is rather general to all those that love God, or annexed to the due observance of the whole law, than of that single precept—but the promised blessing is evidently one that would in a great measure flow as a natural consequence from the due observance of the precept. God assures them that their permanence and prosperity in the land of their expected possession would depend upon their

obedience to this command; and in that he merely states what would be found to be the result of general experience in the course of his providence, that the early habit of respect and reverence to parents and superiors, would tend to the peaceful and prosperous existence of society, by removing the causes of internal discord and decay; while, as to individuals, the salutary restraint of the passions, and the cultivation of a quiet, gentle demeanor would of itself go far towards lengthening the term of human life. But however this may be, due reverence for parents will be found to consist with reverence to God and his institutions, and where this is the case in any community he will display his favor and crown them with the blessings of long life and temporal prosperity.

That this promise had respect primarily to the chosen people, to whom God was now about to give the land of Canaan, is unquestionable; and to them it was doubtless made in a national as well as in an individual character. It was a pledge on the part of God that if they evinced a strict obedience to this command, he would grant them, as a people, a long continuance in their own land in despite of all the attempts of their enemies to conquer and dispossess them. This seems to be confirmed by the parallel language of Deut. 4. 26, 'Ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; *ye shall not prolong your days upon it*, but shall utterly be destroyed.' V. 33, 'Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that *ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.*' V. 40. 'Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and *that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth* (rather, upon the *land*), which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever.' Ch. 32. 46, 47, 'And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life; and through this thing *ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.*' Accordingly we find, that when God threatens the nation with being carried captive out of their own land for their sins, he particularly mentions this among other procuring causes of their calamities, *the not honoring their parents;* Ezek. 22. 7, 12, 15, 'In thee have they set light by father and mother.—Behold therefore—I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries.' But the apostle, Eph. 6. 2, 3, cites this commandment as if the promise still held good under the Christian dispensation, and this fact is doubtless to be accounted for by supposing that *the spirit, the principle*, of the promise is still acted upon under the moral government of Jehovah. Even at the present day, it can scarcely be doubted that, as a general fact, those who are exemplary in the discharge of filial duties become the objects of *a specially rewarding providence* in the longer enjoyment of life and of those temporal blessings which make it desirable. On the other hand, what close observer of the retributive dealings of God, can question that in multitudes of cases the untimely deaths of the young have been the judicial consequences of disobedience to their parents? In how many instances has the confession been extorted from convicted felons, that the first step in their downward career was despising the commands of parents, and the next the breach of the holy sabbath? And it would seem as if the connexion between these two forms of transgression,

13 [s] Thou shalt not kill.

[s] Deut. 5. 17. Matt. 5. 21. Rom. 13. 9.

14 [t] Thou shalt not commit adultery.

[t] Deut. 5. 18. Matt. 5. 27.

was expressly recognised in the page of inspiration, from their being conjointly prohibited; Lev. 19. 3, 'Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths;' as if it were to be expected, as a matter of course, that he who dishonored his parents would habitually profane the sabbath.

At the same time, it is not to be considered as militating with the verity of this promise, if many children distinguished for filial piety should be cut off in their tender years. This no doubt was the case with thousands of the seed of Jacob, and the same thing happens to multitudes in every age. It is sufficient to vindicate the truth of the promise, if it holds good as a *general* fact in the divine administration. And even in the cases that constitute the apparent exceptions, the early called may be taken from the evil to come; and if the years that would have been spent on earth are spent in heaven, it cannot be said that the promise fails of its fulfilment. God is certainly *as good* as his word when he is *better*.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

13. *Thou shalt not kill.* Heb. לא תרצח *la tirtzaha, thou shalt not murder.* Gr. *ου φονευσεις, id.* Chal. 'Thou shalt not kill a soul;' i. e. a person The original רצח *ratzah*, from being in several instances applied to *violent beating, breaking, contusion*, and from general usage, more properly signifies the *violent, unjust*, taking of life, which is usually denominated *murder*. In Arabic it signifies *to overwhelm with stones, to stone to death, to smash a serpent's head with a stone.* It is thus distinguished from הרג *harag*, also translated *to kill*, but which is more legitimately employed to designate that kind of *legal killing* which is the result of the sentence of the magistrate. There are some few exceptions to this remark, as Num. 35. 27—30, as also vv. 11, 23, 25, of the same chapter, where it is used not only of inconsiderate and fortuitous homicide, or chance-medley, but also of killing a malefactor, which was permitted, and even commanded; but the distinction holds good in the main, and the slightest reflection will convince any one that in this precept it must have reference to an *unlawful and unjust taking of life.* The latter verb הרג *harag* is applied also to the *slaying of brute beasts*, which רצח *ratzah* never is. The scope and spirit of the injunction is therefore evident. As life is the greatest of earthly blessings, and the grand foundation of enjoying all others, God is here pleased to make known the sacredness which he would have attached to so inestimable a boon. The sixth commandment plants an inviolable guard around human life. It forbids the wanton extinction of that vital principle which was breathed into man's nostrils by the Deity himself, and the obliteration of that image of God which constituted the glory of Adam at his creation. The infliction of capital punishment for capital crimes, by the sentence of the magistrate is not here forbidden, as such a sentence is virtually involved in the Noachic precept, 'He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;' and confirmed by other passages of the Scriptures. Nor is it probably to be interpreted as prohibiting the taking life in self-defence in *lawful* war, or in a personal attack, where one *knows* that the killing of an assailant or the loss of his own life is the only alternative. In any other case we think it may be seriously doubted whether the non-resisting spirit of the New Testament precepts does not re-

quire us rather to follow the example of the martyrs, who overcame by 'not loving their lives unto death.' If man were contemplated merely in reference to his earthly existence, we do not know that there could be any doubt on the subject; but when we take into view the fact that he is to live forever, that his present state and actions are intimately connected with a system of retributions that extend into eternity, we cannot be sure that the *moral impression* of an example of meek, unresisting suffering at the hands of wicked or cruel men, may not be more important to the best interests of the universe, than that of the contrary course. The immediate effect is no doubt disastrous to him who is the victim, and it is for the time an apparent unrecompensed triumph of might over right. But still, considering how easily God can compensate in another world such a noble sacrifice for the apprehended honor of his name, and also what a tendency it has to awaken all the virtuous sensibilities of the universe in reprobation and vindication of such an outrage upon suffering innocence, we cannot satisfy ourselves that the gospel precepts, 'resist not evil,' 'avenge not yourselves,' are not to be understood in their broadest and most literal acceptation, *as far as the taking of human life in self-defence is concerned.*

As the great point aimed at in this commandment is the security of human life, it of course levels its prohibition against wilful murder, suicide, duelling, offensive war, all the slaughter flowing from sanguinary laws, oppressions, persecutions, and whatever tends directly to shorten our own lives, or those of others. The spirit of the precept plainly interdicts all those callings, occupations, and practices which are injurious to the health or safety of the community, such as the manufacture or sale of articles of diet or beverage which we have every reason to believe will be abused, to the hurt or the death of men's bodies, to say nothing of their effects on the undying soul. In like manner all incompetent practice of the medical art; all competing trials of speed in steamboats; all pugilistic combats, and whatever goes to wound, cripple, or maim the body, and thus endanger life, comes fairly within the range of what is forbidden by the sixth commandment. As far as the spiritual import of the command is concerned, it is clear, from the New Testament interpretation, that all envy, revenge, hatred, malice, or sinful anger; all that insulting language which provokes to wrath and murder; and all undue indulgence of that pride, ambition, or covetousness, which prompt to it, are virtually prohibited by the precept, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Mat. 5. 21, 22, 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.' 1 John, 3. 15—17, 'Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him.'

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* Heb. לֹא תִנְאָף *lo tinaph.* The original root, נָאַף *nâaph* in its primary and legitimate import denotes *adultery* in the strict and exclusive sense of the term, or that unlawful commerce of the sexes

which takes place between parties one or both of whom are married. It is thus distinguished from זנה *zanah*, the word applied to lewdness, fornication, or whoredom in general. This is plain from predominant usage. Thus Lev. 20. 10, 'And the man that *committeth adultery* (נאף *yinaph*) with another man's wife, even he that *committeth adultery* (נאף *yinaph*) with his neighbor's wife, the *adulterer* (נאף *noëph*) and the *adulteress* (נאפת *noëpheth*) shall surely be put to death.' Ezek. 16. 32, 'As a wife that *commiteth adultery* (תמנאפת *hammenëapheth*), which taketh strangers instead of her husband.' Hos. 4. 14, 'Therefore your daughters shall *commit whoredom* (תזנינה *tiznënah*), and your spouses shall *commit adultery* (תנאפנה *tenäaphnah*).' Prov. 6. 32, 'Whoso *committeth adultery* (נאף *noëph*) with a woman lacketh understanding.' That 'woman' here is equivalent to 'wife' is evident from its being immediately added; 'For jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance;' implying that he would be prompted severely to avenge his wife's dishonor. In accordance with this we find this precept rendered in the Greek by a term (μοιχευω) which always signifies what in our language is termed *adultery*. Mat. 5. 32, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to *commit adultery* (μοιχασθαι); and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced *committeth adultery* (μοιχαται).' This was because that in the eye of the divine law she was still considered as rightfully the wife of the divorcing husband. Rom. 7. 3, 'So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an *adulteress* (μοιχαλις): but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no *adulteress* (μοιχαλις) though she be married to another man.' Nor is there any other passage throughout the New Testament where μοιχεια, *adultery*, is used to signify any other species of uncleanness. The appropriate Greek term for sins of lewdness in general is πορνεια usually rendered *fornication*. But this latter term in Scripture usage is of much wider import than the former; in fact it includes the former in numerous instances. Thus a *married* woman, Mat. 5. 32—19. 9, is said to be guilty of πορνεια, which our translators have rendered *fornication*, though her crime is really *adultery*. Accordingly both πορνεια and μοιχεια are used, Rev. 2. 21, 22, in reference to an *adulterous* intercourse; 'I gave her space to repent of her *fornication* (πορνειαν); and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that *commit adultery* (μοιχευοντας) with her,' &c. Again, a man that has his father's wife, and so is guilty of *incest*, is said to be guilty of πορνεια, 1 Cor. 5. 1, 'It is reported commonly that there is *fornication* (πορνεια) among you, and such *fornication* (πορνεια) as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.' Here it is evident that the word must be understood to mean in general any unlawful kind of sexual commerce, of which *incest* is one. For it cannot be supposed that the apostle meant to say that *fornication* was not named among the Gentiles; as it was in fact very common. But what he designs to say is this, that out of many kinds of πορνεια there was one, viz., a man's having his father's wife, which was not heard of among the Gentiles, notwithstanding they were in great measure given up to fornication. Comp. to the same effect Rev. 17, 1, 2. —18. 3. Hos. 3. 3, from all which it is evident that πορνεια is a general term, including under it every species of illicit sexual connexion, and answers perhaps correctly to our English word *lewdness* or *licentiousness*.

From the scope of the foregoing remarks it cannot, we think, be questioned that the seventh commandment is

pointed primarily and predominantly against the sin of *adultery*. Consequently the words of Christ, Mat. 5. 27, 28, are doubtless to be understood as referring especially to this precept thus understood; 'Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath *committed adultery* with her already in his heart.' Our Savior is here explaining the Law; the Law, as we have seen, employs a term in the present precept which is exclusively applied to signify *adultery;* and as *adultery*, which is here charged upon the lustful look, cannot be committed with a 'woman' who is not at the same time a 'wife,' the inference would seem to be inevitable that 'woman' (γυνη) in this passage is synonimous with 'wife' or *married woman*, it being the same term as we find used for 'wife,' v. 31, 32, and elsewhere throughout the New Testament. (See Bloomfield in loc.). But although we feel bound, as faithful expositors, to state the true sense of the terms employed in important connexions, it is not in this or any other instance with a view to lower down the standard of requisition in the divine precepts. On the same principles on which we have interpreted the other commandments, we are constrained to give this also so much latitude as to embrace a prohibition of all the sins usually included under it. These will be easily ascertained when we consider the grand design of this commandment, viz., the preservation and promotion of the general happiness of men *in their conjugal and domestic relations*. For this end God himself has instituted *marriage*. It is by means of this wise and gracious ordinance that he has provided for the regulation of those strong instinctive passions upon which the propagation of the race depends, and nothing is clearer than that a general disregard of this institution would inevitably make havoc of the peace, purity, and highest welfare of society. While therefore the *sanctity of the marriage relation* is the first object aimed to be secured by this precept, it points its prohibition at the same time against every thing that is contrary to the spirit and ends of that institution, whether in thought, word, or deed. And as *marriage* is the sole and exclusive provision made by the Creator to meet the demands of that part of our nature which the seventh commandment contemplates, every species of sensual commerce between the sexes except that which comes under its sanction, is doubtless to be viewed as a violation of this precept, as also every thing that goes by legitimate tendency to produce it. All the arts and blandishments resorted to by the seducer; all the amorous looks, motions, modes of dress, and verbal insinuations which go to provoke the passions and make way for criminal indulgence; all writing, reading, publishing, vending, or circulating obscene books; all exposing or lustfully contemplating indecent pictures or statues; all support of or connivance with the practices of prostitution, whether by drawing a revenue from houses of infamy, or winking at the abominations of their inmates; partake more or less of the guilt of violating the seventh commandment. We have only to glance at the pages of the sacred volume to perceive that sins against the law of chastity are more frequently forbidden, more fearfully threatened, and marked by more decisive tokens of the divine reprobation, than perhaps those of any other part of the Decalogue. Not only is adultery the name under which Jehovah stigmatises the sin of idolatrous apostacy from him, but fornication and uncleanness are found in almost every black catalogue of crime in the Scriptures, and the informations of history, which are but another name for the dealings of God's providence,

15 u Thou shalt not steal.

u Lev. 19. 11. Deut. 5. 19. Matt. 19. 18. Rom. 13. 9. 1 Thess. 4. 6.

16 w Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

w ch. 23. 1. Deut. 5. 20. & 19. 16. Matt. 19. 18.

make it evident that sins of this class have been the cause of more individual crime, shame, disease, misery, and death, and of more public debasement and ruin than any other. What rivers of remorseful tears, what myriads of broken hearts, what wide spread wrecks of happiness, what legacies of shame, reproach, and infamy, what fruits of perdition, have followed and are still following in the deadly train of this destroyer! The disclosures of the great day relative to this sin, its perpetrators, procurers, and consequences, will probably make the universe stand aghast. 'However it may be accounted for, says Paley, 'the criminal commerce of the sexes corrupts and depraves the mind and moral character more than any single species of vice whatsoever. That ready perception of guilt, that prompt and decisive resolution against it, which constitutes a virtuous character, is seldom found in persons addicted to these indulgences. They prepare an easy admission for every sin that seeks it; are, in low life, usually the first stage in men's progress to the most desperate villanies, and, in high life, to that lamented dissoluteness of principle which manifests itself in a profligacy of public conduct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and moral probity.' 'These declarations,' says Dr. Dwight, 'I have long since seen amply verified in living examples.'—Would we then seek an effectual preservative against the undue predominance of those fleshly lusts which war against the soul, let us earnestly and devoutly pray for those purifying influences from above which shall 'cleanse us from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,' and makes us meet temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in, remembering that 'he that defileth the temple of God, him will God destroy.' Let us cultivate universal purity, in secret as well as openly, and feel that the strictest government over all our propensities, senses, and passions is an incumbent duty upon every one who would act upon the safe and salutary principle of the apostle, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

15. *Thou shalt not steal*, Heb. לֹא תִגְנֹב *lo tignab*. Gr. *ου κλεψεις*. The original גנב *ganab* is the usual word for *steal*, and has nothing peculiar in its import to require a special investigation. The scope of the commandment is to secure *the right of property*. It prescribes the mode in which love to our neighbor is to operate in this respect. The subject of property is one of great extent, and by its various relations entering largely into the elements of human happiness. While God is himself the great Proprietor, the ultimate Lord and Disposer of all things, he has established a constitution of things by virtue of which every man is not only entitled himself to the products of his own labor, but authorised also to make it over or bequeath it to his posterity or heirs. It is the wrongful abstraction or invasion of this *property* which the eighth commandment is designed to prohibit; and of all the forms of violation of this precept none is more palpable, more gross, or more highly provoking to God than that of *depriving a man of the product of his labors by depriving him of himself*. This is the most aggravated form of *stealing* of which it is possible to be guilty, or even to conceive. Whatever may be said of other possessions, a man's per-

son is his own; his life is his own; his liberty is his own. He who takes them away without his consent, and without any crime on his part, *steals* them. And surely stealing men is so much a greater crime than stealing money, as a human being holds a higher rank in the scale of existence than inert and senseless matter. The eighth commandment then forbids distinctly and peremptorily all despotic *enslaving* of our fellow-men, of whatever condition or color, or of exercising absolute lordship over them; because those acts virtually deprive human beings of that property in themselves with which the Creator endowed them. This is a usurpation of the rights of man which no usage, law, or custom can legalize in the sight of heaven. No title can make good my claim to another's person; no deed of inheritance or conveyance transmit it to a third party. There is but one Being competent to make the conveyance, and he has never done it. Every man under God *owns himself*. He has a *right* to himself which no other man can challenge. I may be lawfully restrained, punished, and even executed by just laws, but I can never be *owned*. I can never be in the sight of heaven either serf or slave. I cannot sell myself; no other can sell me. Though I may for a consideration make over to another my right to my *services*, yet the right to *myself* is no more alienable by myself than by another. God gave me myself to keep, and his ownership alone in me am I bound to recognize.

Subordinate to this are various forms of the breach of this commandment, of many of which no human laws take cognizance. The essence of dishonesty is the possessing ourselves of that which rightfully belongs to another. This may be done in an almost infinite variety of ways. Fraudulent bargains, which impose on the ignorant, the credulous, or the necessitous; contracting debts which one is unable to pay; extortion and exorbitant gain; controlling the markets by stratagem, and thus obtaining inordinate prices for one's commodities; entering into combinations unduly to raise or to depress wages; taking unjust advantage of insolvent laws; exacting usurious interest for money; unnecessary subsistence on charity; evading the duties and taxes imposed by government, or in any way defrauding the public, whether by embezzling its treasures or encroaching upon its domain; using false weights and measures; removing landmarks; keeping back the wages of servants and hirelings; withholding restitution for former wrongs; refusing, when able, to pay debts from which we have obtained a legal release—all these are violations of the eighth commandment, and as such falling under the special condemnation of heaven. A slight consideration of the spirit of this precept will show that it reaches also beyond outward acts, and prohibits inordinate love of the world, covetousness, and the pride of life; that it requires industry, frugality, sobriety, submission to God's providence; in a word, a disposition to do to all others, in respect to worldly property, as we would that they should do to us.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.* Heb. לֹא תַעֲנֶה *lo taaneh, thou shalt not answer.* That is, more especially when cited to give testimony before a judicial tribunal. The drift of the precept, in its original import, is more fully laid open, Deut. 19. 16—19, 'If a *false witness* rise up against any man to *testify* against him, that which is wrong; then both the men, between whom the controversy is shall stand before the Lord, before the priests, and the judges, which shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquisition; and behold, if the witness be a *false witness*, and

hath *testified falsely* against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.' This precept differs from the three preceding in the fact that while they have respect to injuries done by *deeds* or *actions*, this has reference to wrongs done by *words*. The predominant sense of *bearing witness* is clearly recognised in the verb in this connection in the Gr. ου ψευδομαρτυρησεις, *thou shalt not falsely testify*, and in the Chal., Sam., Syr., and Arab., all which render it *testify*. Yet the term is of large import, equivalent to *utter*, *pronounce*, *declare*, and while the letter admits, the spirit of the precept requires, that it should here be understood as forbidding every thing that is contrary to strict veracity in our communications with our fellow men. We say, 'with our fellow men,' for though the phrase 'against thy *neighbor*,' might seem to limit it to the narrower circle of our immediate neighbors, yet the interpretation given to the term by our Savior, in the parable of the good Samaritan, plainly teaches us that a more extended application is to be assigned it. It is, in fact, equivalent to *other man*, whether acquaintance or stranger, friend or foe. This precept therefore constitutes the law of love as it respects our neighbor's, that is, every other man's, *good name*. And as one of the principal ways in which his interest in this respect may be injured is by having false witness borne against him in courts of justice, this is made the leading and primary, but not the exclusive, point of the prohibition. Lying in this form is denominated 'perjury,' and so far as this sin is concerned, the ninth commandment is closely related to the third, which forbids the taking of God's name in vain, as is always done in a false oath. The difference between them probably lies in this, that in the third perjury is condemned as a gross impiety *towards God*, irrespective of any wrong done thereby to our neighbor; while in this prohibition the head and front of the offending is the false and injurious charge preferred *against our neighbor*. This is a more heinous crime than common extra-judicial falsehood, inasmuch as it is usually more deliberate, and by the sentence to which it leads often involves in itself the guilt of robbery and murder, as well as that of calumny. Accordingly, we find the purport of this commandment otherwise, yet very emphatically expressed, Lev. 19. 16, 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; *neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor*.' That is, thou art not to stand as a false witness against thy neighbor, whereby his *blood*, his *life*, might be endangered. But if we ourselves are not permitted, in judicial matters, thus to injure our neighbor by bearing false witness against him, so neither are we to procure or encourage it in others. Consequently the suborning false witnesses is hereby condemned; and it plainly behoves legal counsel in managing the causes of their clients to guard against a virtual perversion of the truth that shall amount to a bearing of false witness; nor should the verdict of inspiration be forgotten, that 'he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, are both alike an abomination unto the Lord.'

But the scope of the prohibition embraces a multitude of aberrations from the strict law of sincerity and veracity embodied in this precept, which at the same time have nothing to do with judicial proceedings. Of this we are to judge by comparing them with those incidental explications of the ninth commandment which occur here and there both in the Old and New Testament. Nothing can be clearer than that *truth*, *sincerity*, *fidelity*, *candor*, are required to be the governing law in all our communications with our fellow men; and

consequently, whatever is contrary to this is contrary to the spirit of this precept. 'Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.' 'Wherefore,' says the apostle, 'putting away all lying, *speak every man the truth* with his neighbor.' '*Lie not* one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.' Thus too, in the Levitical code, 'Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, *neither lie one to another*.' Thus also, to 'walk uprightly, to work righteousness, and *to speak the truth in his heart*,' are the first lineaments in the good man's character as portrayed by the Psalmist, Ps. 15. 2. Now if this requirement of *universal truthfulness* be not contained in the ninth commandment, it is not embraced at all in the Decalogue; and it is scarcely to be supposed that a sin, which is every where spoken of with the most marked abhorrence, and one of which it is said, that those who are characteristically guilty of it 'shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,' and that 'whatsoever worketh abomination or *maketh a lie*,' shall be excluded from the holy city, is not intended to be expressly forbidden in the perfect law of God. The commandment evidently has its foundation in that character which is given of the Most High in the words of inspiration, Deut. 32. 4, '*A God of truth*, and without iniquity, just and righteous is he.' From this view of the grounds and the tenor of the injunction, it will be evident at a glance, that not only false witness in a court, but false statements in common discourse, false promises, whether deliberate or careless, exaggerations and high colorings of facts, equivocation and deceit by word or sign, hypocritical professions and compliments, together with slandering, backbiting, tale-bearing, circulating malicious reports, imputing evil designs, or making injurious representations without sufficient proof, are all direct infractions of the spirit of this command. These are all obvious methods of working ill to our neighbor, of prejudicing his reputation, and injuring or destroying his usefulness and his peace, and consequently cannot consist with the law of love.

As to such cases as those of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, the Hebrew midwives, Rahab, and David, who are often alleged, on certain occasions in their lives, to have been guilty of gross equivocation, we must refer the reader to the remarks made on those particular points of their conduct in the notes appended to their respective histories. It will there appear that an important distinction is to be made between *telling a falsehood*, and *concealing the truth*, or *a part of the truth*, from those who have no right to demand it. While the one is always wrong, the other is in some instances unquestionably right.

As a preventative or preservative, on the score of the present prohibition, nothing is more important than that parents, guardians, and teachers, should aim to check this perverse propensity in its earliest developments. Children are prone to 'go astray from the womb *speaking lies*.' A 'lying spirit' seems to be more or less indigenous to the soil of the human mind, and without the most assiduous culture is difficult to be expelled. A heedless example in this respect in parents themselves, hastily uttered and soon forgotten threats and promises, a slighter punishment for lying than almost any other fault, will be sure to confirm this evil habit in their offspring, and probably to the ultimate sorrow and affliction of their hearts.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

17. *Thou shalt not covet*, &c. Heb. לֹא תַחְמֹד *lo tahmod*. The general import of the root חָמַד *hamad* is *to desire earnestly, to long for, to lust after*, or in the simpler English phrase, *to*

17 x Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, y thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

x Deut. 5. 21. Mic. 2. 2. Hab. 2. 9. Luke 12. 15. Acts 20. 33. Rom. 7. 7. & 13. 9. Eph. 5. 3, 5. Hebr. 13. 5. y Job 31. 9. Prov. 6. 29 Jer. 5. 8. Matt. 5. 28.

covet. In the parallel passage, Deut. 5. 21, this word is rendered *desire*, and another equivalent term, *covet;* 'Neither *shall thou desire* (תחמד *tahmod*) thy neighbor's wife, neither *shall thou covet* (תתאוה *tithavveh*) thy neighbor's house,' &c. The affection or emotion expressed by the term is not in itself sinful, but becomes so by reason of the *circumstances* or the *degree* in which it is indulged. Accordingly, it is not simply and absolutely said in this commandment, 'Thou shalt not covet,' as in the preceding commandments, 'Thou shalt not kill,' 'Thou shalt not steal,' &c., but a variety of *objects* are specified, towards which, in their relations to others, this inward emotion is not to go forth. In the present connexion, the word strictly signifies to desire to have as our own what belongs to our neighbor to his loss or prejudice, or without his consent; and it implies that degree of propensity or appetency towards an object which usually prompts to the obtaining it, or which immediately precedes an actual volition to that effect. A simple, passing, evanescent, wish to possess any thing valuable or agreeable, which we see to belong to our neighbor, is no doubt, in thousands of cases, the mere prompting of an innate and instinctive desire, which is in itself innocent, and probably the very same feeling which prompted our neighbor himself innocently to procure it. A man may desire an increase of his property, without having a covetous or even a discontented heart. Such wishes are the moving spring to all worldly enterprise and prosperity, without which the various businesses of life would languish and die. But the longing impulse in such cases becomes sinful when it becomes excessive, and amounts to what is termed in the Scriptures an 'evil concupiscence.' This will usually be the result where one is in the habit of setting his neighbor's possessions in contrast with his own, and of dwelling with grieved, grudging, or envious feelings upon the fancied superior advantages of his lot. There can be no harm in desiring a neighbor to *sell* me his house for the real value of it; but it is wrong to desire to possess the house to his prejudice, or by means of injustice or violence. That coveting a man's wife also, which is here forbidden, is not so much the desire of an adulterous intercourse with her while she remains his wife, though this is expressly forbidden, as desiring that she may cease to be his wife, and become the wife of the coveting person. Among the Jews there were two ways in which this might be done; either by a divorce, or by the death of the husband. Accordingly, he that transgressed this branch of the commandment, did really desire either that she would obtain a divorce from her husband, or wish that he was dead; for except upon one or the other of these conditions he could not hope to enjoy her as his own. God therefore forbade this coveting, because he that earnestly desired that a divorce might ensue, would be very apt to take measures to procure its being effected; and he that secretly cherished the desire of the death of a man, in order to possess himself of his wife, would be under a strong temptation to put him out of the way, provided he thought he could do it with impunity, of which we have a striking example in the case of David and Uriah. In like manner, coveting my neighbor's house is nothing else

than earnestly wishing that it may cease to be his property and become mine. Coveting his servant too, is not merely wishing that he might now and then serve me, while he remains his, but that he should cease to be his servant, and thenceforth stand in that relation to me. As therefore we are required by the command to 'remember the sabbath day,' to *do* that which such a remembrance would naturally prompt, so the prohibition against coveting, forbids also all the *actual effects* that legitimately flow from the harboring and cherishing the interdicted affections and passions.

From this the general scope of the prohibition is manifest. It is evidently intended as a safeguard planted around all the rest. It aims to *regulate the heart*, out of which, says our Savior, 'proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.' By forbidding the indulgence of all inordinate desires, it mounts up to the fountain head, from whence flow the manifold evils forbidden in the Decalogue. While the other precepts mainly, though not exclusively, command us to abstain from injurious actions, this requires us to repress covetous inclinations. That it is a precept comprising the utmost spirituality of the law, and effectually refuting the theory that it recognizes as violations only the gross outward act, is clear from the apostle's reference, Rom. 7. 7, 8, 'I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.' The precept therefore reaches deep into the interior springs of action, and lays its interdict upon the very first risings of that *discontented spirit* which is the prolific germ of all unhallowed lustings. To be dissatisfied with what we have is to desire something which we have not; and as most things which we have not are in the possession of our fellow men, there is but a step between desiring what is not our own and coveting what is another's. How necessary then is it to cultivate a contented spirit! Not that we are forbidden to improve our condition; but we are required to keep our minds free from a corroding, complaining, dissatisfied feeling in view of the allotments of God's providence. There must be no envy expressed or unexpressed towards our fellow men; no cherished habits of comparing their prosperity with our adversity, their wealth with our poverty, their blessings with our trials; for in this there is the very essence of ingratitude and rebellion. To specify the innumerable forms in which a covetous spirit shows its pernicious effects would require a volume instead of a few paragraphs, but that the force of the subject may not lose itself in mere generalities, we may observe that *avarice*, or the sordid love of gain for its own sake, may perhaps be considered as leading the van in the train of the sins forbidden by the tenth commandment. This vile idolatry of silver and gold sets its subject in an attitude of the most direct opposition to the demands of the last precept of the Decalogue. Instead of leaving men content with a moderate sufficiency of the good things of life, or with that gradual process of accumulation which coincides with the usual order of providence, a spirit of avarice goads them on with restless eagerness to grasp at greater and greater possessions, to make haste to be rich, and to form schemes of wealth which are seldom carried into execution without fraud, chicanery, extortion, and oppression. From those measures of gain which are usually free from reproach, the transition is easy and natural to the spirit and the practices of hazardous and rash speculation, and thence to downright gaming, where the turn of a die is allowed to fix one's lot in misery for life, and entail long years of anguish upon an innocent family. Let us then pray the prayer which invokes 'neither riches nor poverty.'

Let us aim to have engraven upon the tablets of our souls the inspired declaration, that 'godliness with contentment is great gain,' and by 'coveting earnestly the best gifts,' avoid the danger of every other form of covetousness.

Such then is that remarkable code of moral duty comprised in the Ten Commandments, spoken by the great Lawgiver of the universe at Mount Sinai. In view of it, we cannot but be reminded of the solemn appeal made by Moses to Israel, Deut. 4. 8, 'What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this Law which I set before you this day?' Hitherto the Most High had declared the perfections of his nature by the mighty acts which he had put forth in a way of favor to his people and of vengeance to his enemies. But in the Law before us he condescended to open his mouth, and with his own majestic voice, to proclaim in their ears his name, his attributes, and his will. And what language is adequate to describe the deference, the awe, with which its every sentence should be pondered, its every demand responded to! If we look with respect and veneration upon the monuments of legislative wisdom handed down to us from a remote antiquity—if the laws of Solon and Lycurgus, and the tables and pandects of the Roman jurisprudence, are entitled to our admiration—with what profound reverence should we contemplate the enactments of the infinite Jehovah, the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, the source of all power and dominion, 'by whom kings rule and princes decree justice.' All human codes may in one sense be considered as emanating *indirectly* from God, inasmuch as he is the author of the faculties by which they were prompted, and has, in his moral administration of the world, given them a providential sanction by requiring obedience to them in the express injunction; 'Obey the powers that be.' But in the Law of Sinai we read a system of statutes that has emanated *directly* from God, and that distinguishes itself at once from all human codes, which take cognizance of overt acts only, by pointing its requirements at the inward dispositions and affections of the heart. Every one of its several precepts condemns, not merely the outward act which it expressly prohibits, but the indulgence of all those evil passions, propensities, or sentiments, which would lead to it; enjoining at the same time an opposite conduct and the cultivation of opposite dispositions. In this extensive interpretation of the commandments we are warranted, not merely by the deductions of reason, but by the letter of the Law itself. The addition of the *last* 'Thou shalt not covet,' proves clearly that in *all*, the disposition of the heart, as truly as the immediate outward act, is the object of the divine Legislator; and thus it forms a comment on the meaning, as well as a guard for the observance of all the preceding precepts. Understood in this natural and rational latitude of import, how comprehensive and momentous is this summary of moral duty! How every way worthy of the source from whence it springs! It inculcates the adoration of the one true God who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, who must therefore be infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, and entitled to the profoundest fear, homage, and gratitude of his intelligent creatures. It prohibits every species of idolatry; whether by associating false gods with the true, or worshipping the true by symbols and images. In forbidding the taking the name of God in vain, it enjoins the observance of all outward respect for the divine authority, as well as the cultivation of inward sentiments and feelings, suited to this outward reverence. It establishes the obligation of oaths, and,

by consequence, that of all compacts and deliberate promises; a principle, without which the administration of laws would be impracticable, and the bonds of society must be dissolved. By commanding to keep holy the sabbath, as a memorial of the creation, it establishes the necessity of public worship, and of a stated and outward profession of the truths of religion with a corresponding frame of heart. So kind and considerate are the provisions of this precept, that the rest of the sabbath is made to include the menial classes, the sojourning stranger, and even the laboring cattle; thus evincing that the Creator of the universe extended his care to all his creatures; that the humblest of mankind were the objects of his paternal care; that no accidental differences causing alienation among different nations, would alienate any from the divine regard; and that even the brute creation shared the benevolence of the universal Father, and ought to be treated by men with gentleness and humanity.

When we proceed to the second table, comprising more especially our social duties, we find equal matter of admiration in the principles which they recognize and enforce. The precept which proclaims 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' sanctions the practice, not merely of filial obedience, but of all those duties which arise from our domestic relations, and impresses the important conviction that the entire Law proceeds from a Legislator able to search and judge the inmost actings of the heart. The subsequent commands coincide with the clearest dictates of reason, and prohibit crimes which human laws have in general prohibited as plainly destructive of social happiness. But it was of infinite importance to rest the prohibitions, 'Thou shalt not kill,' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt not bear false witness,' on the weight of divine authority, and not merely on the deductions of human reason. The depraved passions of men, idolatrous delusions, and false ideas of public good, would be an over match for the restraints which they impose without a higher sanction than their own salutary tendency. Indeed we have only to compare the precepts of the Decalogue with the tone of moral sentiment which then prevailed throughout the world, to recognize upon it at a single glance the stamp of divinity. In one country we see theft allowed, if perpetrated with address; in another piracy and rapine allowed, if conducted with intrepredity. Sometimes we see adultery and the most unnatural crimes not only permitted and perpetrated without shame or remorse, but every species of impurity enjoined and consecrated as a part of divine worship. In others, we find revenge honored as manly spirit, and death inflicted at its impulse with savage triumph. Again we see every feeling of nature outraged, and parents exposing their helpless children to perish for deformity of body, or from mercenary or political views. Finally, we see false religions leading their deluded followers to heap their altars with human victims. The master butchers his slave, the conqueror his captive; nay, to crown the horrors of the recital, the parent sacrifices his tender offspring, drowning their heart-rending shrieks with the noise of cymbals and the yells of fanaticism! These abominations have disgraced ages and nations which we are accustomed to celebrate as civilized and enlightened. Babylon and Egypt, Phenicia and Carthage, Greece and Rome, have all had their legislators who enjoined, or their philosophers who defended these horrid barbarities and crimes. The same or similar enormities are still found to be practised among various heathen communities where the light of revelation has not yet penetrated. What a contrast do we behold

18 ¶ And [z] all the people [a] saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain [b] smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.

[z] Hebr. 12. 18. [a] Rev. 1. 10, 12.

[b] ch. 19. 18.

in turning from these revolting outrages upon reason and humanity to the wise, just, upright, and benignant code promulgated by Jehovah in the Law of the ten commandments! Here we behold a code inculcating clearly and authoritatively the two great principles upon which all true piety and virtue depend, and which our blessed Lord recognized as having the whole Law and the Prophets hung upon them, LOVE TO GOD AND LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOR. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt *love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thine heart, and with all thy might.*' Thus also, 'Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, *but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*' Such is the moral constitution with which we in the providence of God are favored; by which we are to be judged; and according to which we are to frame the course of our lives and order the temper of our hearts. Under a sense of our moral impotence we cannot indeed but exclaim with the apostle, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' but thanks be to God that in the gospel of his grace he hath provided an obedience to the Law infinitely better than our own, of which every one to whom the message comes is invited, through faith, to avail himself to the joy of his heart and the salvation of his soul.

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18. *And all the people saw the thunderings.* Heb. ראים את הקלת *roim eth hakkoloth*, (*were*) *seeing the voices.* Gr. εωρα την φωνην, *saw the voice;* the usual scriptural term for *thunder.* The phraseology is Hebraic, of which we have already considered a parallel specimen, Gen. 42. 1. The term appropriate to the sense of *seeing* is, from the superiority of that sense, here used in reference to objects of *hearing*, and would be more properly rendered by the English word *perceive*, which is applicable to any of the senses. Comp. Rev. 1. 12, 'And I turned *to see the voice* that spake with me.' Jer. 2. 31, 'O generation, *see the word* of the Lord;' i. e. hear, receive, apprehend appreciate it. —— *Lightnings.* Heb. הלפידים *hallappidim, lamps* or *torches;* so called probably because a flash of lightning somewhat resembles the light of a torch suddenly and rapidly waved to and fro by the hand. See Note on Gen. 15. 17. —— ¶ *The noise of the trumpet.* Heb. קול השפר *kol hashshopher, the voice of the trumpet.* The portentous sounds of the trumpet and the thunder, which had ushered in the day and which continued to be heard while the people were assembling at the base of the mountain, probably ceased while the words of the law were pronounced in an articulate voice by Jehovah, but were again resumed, and perhaps with increased intensity, as soon as the delivery of the Decalogue was completed. The consequence was, that the phenomena of the scene were too overpowering for the people. It was a manifestation too awful for human endurance, and accordingly, as the Apostle tells us, Heb. 12. 19, 'They could not endure the things which were spoken,' and 'they which heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.' Some have supposed that had it not been for the terror and the remonstrances of the people God would, after a little interval, have proceeded and delivered the remaining laws, statutes, and judgments in the same manner. But of this we see no sufficient evidence, either from the

19 And they said unto Moses, [e] Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but [d] let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20 And Moses said unto the people, [e] Fear not: [f] for God is come to prove you, and [g] that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto [h] the thick darkness where God *was*.

[e] Deut. 5. 27. & 18. 16. Gal. 3. 19, 20. Hebr. 12. 19. [d] Deut. 5. 25. [e] 1 Sam. 12. 20. Isai. 41. 10, 13. [f] Gen. 22. 1. Deut. 13. 3.

[g] Deut. 4. 10. & 6. 2. & 10. 12. & 17. 13, 19. & 19. 20. & 28. 58. Prov. 3. 7. & 16. 6. Isai. 8. 13. [h] ch. 19. 16. Deut. 5. 5. 1 Kings 8. 12.

words of the present narrative, or from the more full detail of incidents recorded, Deut. 5. 22—31, which the reader will find it interesting to compare with the account before us. The essential character and scope of the ten commandments, as compared with the rest of the Mosaic code, would make it proper that it should be promulgated in a different manner.——¶ *Removed.* Heb. וירנעו *va-yanu-u.* The root נוע *nua* is used not only to convey the idea of *physical motion*, or *removal*, but also of *mental disturbance, agitation*, or *trembling*. Accordingly the Gr. renders it by φοβηθεντες, *affrighted*, and the Chal. in the same manner; 'And the people saw and trembled and stood afar off.' So also the Lat. Vulg. 'Terrified and panic-struck.' We have little doubt that this is the genuine sense of the term. It expresses at least that degree of mental emotion which would naturally prompt to a bodily removal.

19. *And they said unto Moses*, &c. This it appears from Deut. 5. 23, was done through the medium of the elders and heads of the congregation, who came from the people to Moses, while he remained in his place. For he says in the passage just cited that 'they came near unto him,' when they spake these words; which implies that they were at some distance before.——¶ *Lest we die.* Upon this popular belief among the chosen people in ancient times, see Notes on Gen. 16. 13. Judg. 6. 22.—13. 22.

20. *And Moses said unto the people, Fear not*, &c. Moses encourages and comforts them against that fear of immediate death which they appear to have entertained, and at the same time assures them that from fear of another kind they were not by any means to be freed. Indeed it was one special design of the present array of terrors to inspire them with it. The language marks very clearly the distinction between the fear which has torment, which flows from conscious guilt, which genders to bondage, and which drives away from God, and that salutary fear which prompts to a deep reverence of the divine Majesty, and habitually influences the conduct.——¶ *To prove you.* Heb. לנסות *nassoth*, *to try, to tempt.* Upon the import of this term see Note on Gen. 22. 1, respecting God's temptation of Abraham. Instead of coming to consume them, he had come to put their obedience to a fresh proof; to give them a more signal opportunity than ever before to evince their deference and devotedness to his will. All the fearful accompaniments of this august manifestation, were intended to impress them with a profound regard to the authority and majesty of Jehovah, and thus to restrain them from sinning against him.

21. *Moses drew near*, &c. Heb. נגש *niggash*, *was made to draw near*; the form of the verb being passive. Of his own motion Moses would scarcely have durst to venture into the thick darkness from which ever and anon the appalling gleams of lightning burst forth; but being specially called and encouraged of God, he was virtually taken by the hand and led up into the precincts of the divine presence. The incident plainly pointed to their and our

22 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel; Ye have seen that I have talked with you [i] from heaven.

[i] Deut. 4. 36. Neh. 9. 13.

23 Ye shall not make [k] with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

[k] ch. 32. 1, 2, 4. 1 Sam. 5. 4, 5. 2 Kings 17. 33. Ezek. 20. 39. & 43. 8. Dan. 5. 4, 23. Zeph. 1. 5. 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16.

need of a Mediator in all our attempts to deal with a God of immaculate purity and inflexible justice.——¶ *Unto the thick darkness where God was.* Chal. 'Where the Glory of the Lord was.' Targ. Jon. 'Where the Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord was.' The original word for 'thick darkness' (ערפל *araphel*) is rendered in the Greek of the New Testament, Heb. 12. 18, θυελλα, which properly denotes a *storm* or *tempest*, and so also it is rendered by the Sept. Duet. 4. 11, and 5. 22, in both which cases the English translation is 'thick darkness.' The idea is probably that of just such a dark, lowering, threatening cloud as is usually with us attended by raging whirlwinds, tempests, and rain.

22. *The Lord said unto Moses*, &c. There can be little doubt that this verse contains the ground and reason of the prohibition in the next; but the exact chain of sequence which connects the two together, is not perfectly obvious from the face of the narrative. But upon referring to the parallel passage, Deut. 4. 14—16, where a more detailed account is given of the solemn transactions of Sinai, we seem to be furnished with a clue to the connexion. 'And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire); Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female,' &c. From this we gather that the injunction before us is equivalent to saying, 'Ye have seen the manner in which I appeared and spake with you from heaven. Ye yourselves are witnesses that no manner of similitude, no visible figure or form, nothing which could be represented by any pictorial or sculptured semblance, entered into the scenery that then struck your senses. Therefore do not think of embodying your conceptions of me in a material image. Do not dishonor and degrade me by dividing my worship with that of gods of silver or of gold. I will have no participation with images or idols, the work of your own hands.'

23. *Ye shall not make with me gods*, &c. Heb. לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן אִתִּי *lo taasun itti*, correctly rendered, *ye shall not make with me;* i. e. ye shall not make to worship in conjunction with me; plainly implying that this could not be done without making them *rivals* with him. The Chal. has however 'before me;' and this seems to be occasionally the force of the equivalent particle עִם *im*. Thus, Est. 7. 8, 'Then said the king, Will he force the queen also *before me* (עִמִּי *immi*) in the house?' So 2 Sam. 6. 7, 'And then he died *by the ark* (עִם אֲרוֹן *im aron*) of God,' compared with the parallel expression, 1 Chron. 13. 10, 'And there he died *before God* (לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים *liphne Elohim*.)' By *gods of silver and of gold* is plainly meant *idols* made of those materials, although in accommodation to popular usages of speech he dignifies them with the title of *gods*. Thus the Israelites when they made the golden calf in the wilderness (which in Acts, 7. 41, is expressly termed an idol), are said Ex. 32. 8, 31, to have 'made them gods of

24 ¶ An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, [l] thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all [m] places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will [n] bless thee.

25 And [o] if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone, for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

[l] Lev. 1. 2. [m] Deut. 12. 5, 11, 21. & 14. 23. & 16. 6, 11. & 26. 2. 1 Kings 8. 43. & 9. 3. 2 Chron. 6. 6. & 7. 16. & 12. 13. Ezra 6. 12. Neh. 1. 9. Ps. 74. 7. Jer. 7. 10, 12.

[n] Gen. 12. 2. Deut. 7. 13. [o] Deut. 27. 5. Josh 8. 31.

gold,' and the idols or images of the Philistines, 2 Sam. 5. 21; 1 Chron. 14. 12, are called their 'gods.' The words of this verse are a virtual repetition of the second commandment, and point to that sin to which God foresaw the peculiar addictedness of his chosen people. Their whole subsequent history shows us that idolatry was their besetting iniquity, and consequently that against which of all others they most needed to be put upon their guard. If the true worship of the true God were corrupted, every thing would be sure to go wrong.

24. *An altar of earth thou shalt make*, &c. This was a temporary regulation, having respect to such *occasional* altars as were erected on special emergencies, of which see instances, Judg. 6. 24.—13. 10. 1 Sam. 7. 17. They were made by heaping up a quantity of earth, and covering it with green turf. As God designed to have the worship of his people eventually concentrated at one place, he would not allow the rearing of altars of durable materials or finished workmanship elsewhere, lest his main purpose should be frustrated.——¶ *Shall sacrifice thereon—thy peace-offerings.* Heb. שלמיך *shelamĕka*, lit. *pay-offerings, compensations, retributions, pacifications*, from שלם *shalam, to make up, to make good, restore, repay*, and thence *to make up a difference, to effect a reconcilation, to be at peace.* In this case the idea would perhaps be better conveyed by the phrase 'welfare-offerings,' or 'thank-offerings,' i. e. offerings elicited by a grateful sense of the divine goodness to the offerer. The English reader might suppose, from the present rendering, 'peace-offerings,' that they were oblations presented for the purpose of securing *peace* or *reconciliation* with God; but this was the design rather of the 'burnt-offerings,' which were strictly *propitiatory* in their nature, whereas the 'peace-offerings' were merely *eucharistical.* For the use of the word 'peace,' in the sense of 'welfare,' see Note on Gen. 29. 6.——¶ *In all places where I record my name.* Heb. אזכיר את שמי *azkir eth shemi, make my name to be remembered.* Chal. 'In every place where I shall make my Glory to dwell.' Gr. 'Where I shall name my name.' The meaning is, in all places which I shall appoint for the celebration of my name, for the performance of my worship.

25. *Thou shalt not build it of hewn stone.* The reason of this probably was, that carved and wrought stone usually expressed some kind of similitude or image which might turn to an occasion of superstition; besides that they would be apt to be of a more durable nature, and therefore more easily converted to monuments of idolatry. It is possible, moreover, that this might be forbidden to the Israelites, in opposition to the practices of the heathen, who built their altars of hewn stones, and by having them curiously wrought and adorned, rendered them more attractive as places of worship. ——¶ *If thou lift up thy tool upon it thou hast polluted it.* Not that the tool it elf had the power of pollution, but

26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

the work was polluted or defiled by being done *contrary to the express command of heaven.*

26. *Neither shalt thou go up by steps,* &c. The reason is subjoined. As the garments of the priests were long and flowing, their ascending a flight of steps might indecorously expose their persons. The ascent to the altar of the tabernacle was therefore undoubtedly by a gentle slope, and a still farther precaution against the inconvenience in question was afterwards adopted in the kind of garments prescribed to the priests.

THE SHEKINAH.

As this is a term of very frequent occurrence in the Notes composing the present work, and one conveying a meaning of vast importance to the right exposition of numerous passages in the Scriptures, we have concluded to devote a few supplementary pages to its elucidation. Whatever impressions of the intrinsic moment of the subject the reader may have received from our previous allusions to it, we have no doubt they will be materially deepened by the results of the critical enquiry upon which we now enter. If it were merely a point of curious antiquarian research, of the same class with the hieroglyphics of Egypt, or even the monumental records of the chosen people themselves, we should deem its claims upon our attention comparatively slight. But involving, as we are persuaded it does, an important clue to the true nature of the *divine manifestations* recorded in the Old Testament, and their relation to the person and character of Christ, we know of no theme in the whole compass of revelation that more imperiously demands to be investigated. It is not possible indeed that our present limits should allow of full justice being done to the discussion, but we may still be able to present it in a somewhat more prominent light than is done in any of our previous or subsequent annotations.

The etymology of the term first claims our notice. The Hebrew word שכינה *shekinah* comes by the most normal mode of formation from the root שכן *shakan*, which signifies *to dwell, to dwell in, to inhabit*, but more usually spoken of that kind of dwelling common to nomade tribes, viz., in tents or tabernacles. The derivative שכינה *shekinah* is defined by Buxtorf (Lex. Rabbin. voc. שכן) to signify primarily *habitation* or *cohabitation*, but as being spoken more particularly of the divine presence, glory, and majesty, or of the Divinity itself when it is said to be present to men, or to converse with them, or to vouchsafe to them its sensible and gracious aid. He remarks, moreover, that it is commonly explained by the Rabbinical writers of *the divine glory or majesty* in its external manifestation, as something present and dwelling among men. Accordingly the following among hundreds of other passages are rendered by the Chaldee Targum of Onkelos and Jonathan conformably to this definition; Ps. 74. 2, 'Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old; this mount Zion wherein *thou hast dwelt*.' Chal. 'Wherein thou hast made thy *Shekinah* to dwell.' Num. 10. 36, 'Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.' Chal. 'Return now, O Word of the Lord, to thy people Israel, make the glory of thy *Shekinah* to dwell among them, and have mercy on the thousands of Israel.' Num. 11. 20, 'Ye have despised the Lord which is among you.' Chal. 'Ye have despised the Word of the Lord whose *Shekinah* dwelleth among you.' Hag. 1. 8, 'Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and will be *glorified*, saith the Lord.' Chal. 'And

I will make my *Shekinah* to dwell there in glory.' Ps. 85. 10, 'His salvation is nigh them that fear him, that *glory* may dwell in our land.' This is distinctly explained by Aben Ezra as meaning that the *Shekinah* may be established in the land.

It would be easy to multiply passages to the same effect ad libitum, for even the voluminous citations of Buxtorf do not embrace a tithe of the examples of the usage, which may be drawn from the Pentateuch alone. It is the current phraseology of the Chaldee Paraphrases wherever in our version we meet with any intimation of a visible display of the divine glory. Indeed the terms 'Glory' and 'Shekinah' are evidently recognised by the Targumists as convertible terms. These writers, it is well known, were Jews, and on this point we have no reason to doubt that they have transmitted, with singular fulness and accuracy, the traditions of their fathers from the earliest periods of the ancient economy. Still we should make comparatively little account of this, were it not that their interpretations on this head distinctly accord with the results which we obtain from a strict investigation of the sacred text itself. In fact, without designing it, they have yielded a most important testimony to the truth of the New Testament doctrine respecting the Messiah, as will appear more clearly from the sequel of these remarks.

In coming now to a more close examination of the subject of the Shekinah, we are met at the outset by an apparant discrepancy in the scriptural statements relative to the divine manifestations. On the one hand, we have a tolerably numerous class of texts speaking the language that follows; John, 1. 18, 'No man *hath seen* God at any time.' Col. 1. 15, 'Who is the image of the *invisible* God.' 1 Tim. 1. 17, 'Unto the king eternal, immortal, *invisible*, the only wise God.' 1 Tim. 6. 16, 'Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom *no man hath seen nor can see*.' Declarations like these establish it as an unquestionable truth, that God is a spirit, pure, incorruptible, immaterial, and in his own nature absolutely incapable of becoming an object of corporeal vision. This is to be maintained as a radical truth, not only of revelation, but of reason. But then on the other hand what can be more explicit, as far as the letter is concerned, in affirming some kind of visibility of the Deity, than the following passages? Ex. 24. 9—11, 'Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; *and they saw the God of Israel*, and under his feet was, as it were, &c.—And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also *they saw God*, and did eat and drink.' So likewise at the delivery of the Law from mount Sinai Jehovah was in some sense certainly visible; for he announces to Moses, Ex. 19. 11, that 'on the third day he would come down *in the sight of all the people*.' And in speaking of this event afterwards, Deut. 4. 12, in an address to Israel, he says, 'Jehovah talked with you *face to face* in the mount out of the midst of the fire. The same is affirmed of Moses in person, Ex. 33. 11, 'And the Lord spake unto Moses *face to face*, as a man speaketh unto his friend.' In like manner the prophet Isaiah says of himself, ch. 6. 1, 'In the year that king Uzziah died *I saw also the Lord* sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple;' and again in v. 5, of the same chapter; 'Then said I, Wo is me! for I am undone—for mine eyes *have seen the King, the Lord of hosts*.'

How then are these modes of speech to be reconciled? Their apparent contrariety shows at least with what confidence the book of God appeals to our reason on the ground of the general evidence of its origin, exhibiting as it does such examples of *literal* self-conflict in particular passages. A work of imposture could not *afford* to be thus seemingly indifferent to appearances. In the case before us it must be confessed, that there is something of a problem to be solved by the interpreter of the sacred text, and yet he cannot be long in coming to the conclusion, that the object seen could not be God in his essence, but some symbol, sign, token, or medium, through which he was pleased, in a unique and peculiar manner, to manifest his presence. Such an object was the Shekinah, which appears to have been a concentrated glowing brightness, a preternatural splendor, enfolded by a dark cloud, except when occasionally some faint glimpses of the imprisoned radiance were disclosed. Probably no word is so well suited to express this overpowering effulgence as the term 'glory,' and this is, in fact, the very term employed in repeated instances for the purpose. Whether this visible object, however, was in philosophical strictness material or immaterial, we hold it to be impossible to determine. For aught that appears to the contrary, it may have been a substance homogeneous with the glorified bodies of Christ and his saints. Indeed, so far as we can judge from the specimen afforded at the scene of the transfiguration, this appears to us an entirely probable supposition. But however this may be, let it suffice that it was something which came within the cognizance of the senses. It was a supernatural something which could be seen, and was seen; and it was moreover something which God saw fit to constitute as the special indication of his presence. In this, however, we are not to conceive of the omnipresent Jehovah as foregoing the ordinary conditions of his being, or circumscribing his infinity within assignable limits. As he is every where present, and incapable of being otherwise, we cannot consider him, physically speaking—if the term may be allowed—as *really* any more present in the Shekinah than in any or every other point of the universe, which his inscrutable nature pervades. Yet nothing prevents us from supposing that he may have affixed to some sensible and miraculous phenomenon a special significancy as a medium of manifesting his will or agency to his creatures. Such a medium is usually in scriptural diction termed 'an Angel,' and this fact affords a clue to the solution of a multitude of passages where mention is made of the 'Angel of the Lord.' It is wholly unnecessary in many of these texts to suppose the presence of any *created* spiritual intelligence whatever. *The visible phenomenon was the angel, and that only.* This phraseology is peculiarly applicable to the Shekinah, which by way of eminence is again and again so denominated, as appears from the Note on Ex. 32. 34. Nothing is more common, moreover, in the ancient versions, than to meet with the phrase, 'Angel of Jehovah,' as equivalent to this visible representative of Jehovah. While therefore we are not so to think of the Shekinah as if God were really contained in it in any sense, in which we do not at the same time suppose him to be contained in every other object in the universe, and in every other portion of space, we are still to believe that he might, and that he did, in a sovereign manner, connect the manifestation of his peculiar presence with this sensible symbol. It can scarcely be necessary here to repeat, that whatever spiritual presence was associated with the visible

phenomenon, it was not that which was seen or heard. 'The Father who hath sent me,' says the Savior, 'hath borne witness of me; ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.' Indeed, we have no reason to suppose that *any* spiritual being ever was or can be seen. Even in the intercourse of human beings with each other, the spirit is never seen; it is only made known by its external manifestations, of which the *face* is one of the most striking. Were it not so common, nothing would be more wonderful than that the inward emotions and affections of the soul, in all their variety, can be so legibly stamped upon that material organization which we behold in the eyes and other features of the human countenance. What a marvel—what a mystery—is a *smile* or a *frown*, as expressed in the movements and aspect of the face! What an index of the hidden workings of the sentient spirit! It is doubtless in direct allusion to this, that the Shekinah is repeatedly called the *Face* or *Presence*, or *Angel of the Face*, of Jehovah. It was a medium of expression to the thoughts and feelings and purposes of his mind precisely analogous to that which the human countenance is to the human mind. But as we have already expanded this view of the subject in our Notes on Ex. 25. 30; 33. 14, 15, we forbear to enlarge upon it here.

We would rather call the attention of the reader to the fact, that inasmuch as the sensuous and seen Shekinah was the adopted symbol of the divine Presence, the free and bold diction of the Scriptures denominates it, in multitudes of instances, by the very titles which are appropriated to Jehovah himself. This will have been very apparent in the quotations already made, and similar instances will be found of almost perpetual occurrence in the Notes of this and the succeeding volume.

Consequently there is no ground for the opinion, advanced by some commentators, that the spiritual being who acted in conjunction with the Shekinah, was some inferior created being, representing Jehovah, and therefore using his name and claiming his authority. The Scriptures afford not the least shadow of evidence in support of such an hypothesis. The character and titles of the supreme God are appropriated to the person concerned in these appearances in such a way that no form of speech, no principles of interpretation, will allow of their being applied to him who merely represents or personates him. The whole worship of the church is uniformly throughout the Old Testament properly and immediately directed to the person appearing, or acting in these appearances, without any intimation of a representative. So that if the person appearing in the Shekinah be a representative only, he is not only a representative speaking in the name of another, and with his authority, but he must be his representative in receiving religious worship also; for to him was all the worship of the church directed as its immediate object. The whole scope of the language respecting the worship of the Israelitish church plainly recognises the fact, that it was addressed to Jehovah who dwelt between the Cherubim in the Most Holy place. How then can it be imagined that in a true revelation any other being than the one only God should be proposed as the object of prayer? It is well known to have been the first and fundamental article of the Jewish creed, that there is only one true God, and him only were they to worship and serve. 'If, therefore,' says Lowman, 'we consider another spirit or an angel to be the only

person appearing, the whole worship of the church will then be given to that person or spirit directly and immediately, and not to the one God of Israel, and the Most High. And in this sense, as I apprehend, the whole religious service of the church must have been an express contradiction to the chief and principal doctrine of the Jewish religion, and indeed of all true religion natural as well as revealed. The worshippers of God, under the Jewish dispensation, seem very sensible of this truth, and often express how highly they were concerned never to dissent from it, or to worship any other than the one true God, on any pretence whatever. And yet throughout the whole of this dispensation all their prayers and their whole worship were addressed to the Shekinah, or to the person who appeared in it, though they never once give the least intimation, on any occasion, that the person appearing was properly an angel, and not the Most High. So that if the person appearing in the Shekinah was only an angel, or any other being than the Supreme God himself, it would seem that the whole worship of the church, for two thousand years together, was offered to one object, besides, and against the intention of every worshipper, and against the chief fundamental doctrines and rule of their religion.' We are brought, therefore, so far as we can see, irresistibly to the conclusion, that it was the Great Jehovah, the one living and true God, who appeared in the Shekinah, and who through that medium manifested his presence and communicated his will to the chosen people.

A point of equal interest and importance now invites our attention, viz., to determine the relation borne by the Shekinah to Christ. The opinion has long since become a doctrine in the Christian church, that the theophanies recorded in the Old Testament were in some sense to be referred to the Son of God, anticipating in this way his future manifestation in human flesh as the great Mediator between God and man. Still it must be confessed that a very considerable degree of vagueness has marked the views which have been entertained on this subject. It seems not to have been distinctly apprehended *in what character* precisely the Messiah is to be regarded in those manifestations. Was it the *human* or the *divine* nature which went to the constitution of his glorious person, that was made sensibly present on those occasions? If the former, how is this to be reconciled with the fact, that his human nature did not exist till he was born at Bethlehem of the virgin? If the latter, then we are forced to the conclusion, that Christ's godhead was Jehovah's godhead; that his divinity was absolutely identical with that of the Supreme God, whom we have already shown to have been exclusively concerned in these remarkable appearances. This, we have no question, is indeed the fact, and on this ground we are satisfied that an irrefragable argument may be built in proof of the real and essential deity of the Savior of men; but it is our purpose to come at this conclusion through the avenue opened before us by the usus loquendi of the Scriptures and the Jewish church relative to the Shekinah.

No one at all conversant with the Chaldee paraphrases can have failed to notice, that besides 'Shekinah,' the title which they very frequently give to the appearances of the divine being spoken of in the Hebrew records is מֵימְרָא דַיהוָה *mēmra da-Yehovah*, which as the Greek language prevailed and acquired a fixed predominance, was translated 'The Logos, or Word of the Lord.' The Shekinah, as we have seen, was a sensible medium of the manifestation of the

divine presence and the declaration of the divine will. An audible voice very frequently accompanied its visible apparition, and as it was in fact the standing organ of communication between Jehovah and his covenant people through all the periods of the ancient economy, nothing would be more natural than that it should come to be designated by the phrase 'Word of the Lord,' or by way of eminence, 'The Word.' Words, either written or spoken, are the established vehicle for conveying the thoughts and feelings of one human being to another. The Shekinah, in like manner, by addressing the senses communicated the designs and will of God to men. The two media answered the same purpose and discharged the same office. How natural, therefore, and how proper, to call the Shekinah 'the Word of the Lord'? Accordingly the evidence is superabundant, that this appellation, in reference to the Shekinah, was perfectly familiar to the Jews at and before the time of our Savior; and as used by their writers would convey an idea entirely equivalent to that couched under the ordinary terms for the divine appearances above alluded to. Out of hundreds of instances, which might be adduced to this effect, we present the following in tabellated form; premising that in the right hand column, under the title 'Chaldee,' we give indiscriminately the renderings of Onkelos or Jonathan, as they may happen to be more or less pertinent to our purpose.

HEBREW.	CHALDEE.
Gen. 3. 8. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the midst of the garden.	And they heard the voice of *the Word of the Lord* walking in the garden.
Ch. 28. 20, 21. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and keep me, &c., then shall the Lord be my God.	And Jacob vowed a vow to the *Word*, saying, If *the Word of the Lord* will be my help, &c., then shall the Lord be my God.
Ch. 35. 9. And God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Padan-aram; and blessed him.	And *the Word of the Lord* appeared to Jacob the second time, when he was coming from Padan-Aram; and blessed him.
Ex. 16. 8. Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.	Your murmurings are not against us, but against *the Word of the Lord*.
Ch. 19. 17. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God.	And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with *the Word of the Lord*.
Ch. 30. 6. Where I will meet with thee.	Where I will appoint for thee *my Word*.
Lev. 26. 11, 12. And I will set my tabernacle among you; and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and be your God.	And I will set my tabernacle among you; and *my Word* shall not reject you. And I will cause my *Shekinah* to dwell among you, and be to you a God.
Num. 11. 20. Because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you.	Because ye have contemptuously rejected *the Word of the Lord*, whose *Shekinah* dwelleth among you.
Ch. 14. 9. Only rebel not ye against the Lord.	But rebel not ye against *the Word of the Lord*.
Ch. 23. 4. And God met Balaam.	And *the Word from before the Lord* met Balaam.

HEBREW.	CHALDEE.
Deut. 1. 30. The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you.	*The Word of the Lord thy God*, who is thy leader, shall fight for you.
Ch. 1. 32, 33. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you the way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.	And in this thing ye did not believe in *the Word of the Lord your God*, who went as a leader before you, &c.
Ch. 13. 18. When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God.	If thou shalt be obedient to *the Word of the Lord thy God.*

With this array of testimonies before us, it is impossible to question that the term 'Logos' or 'Word' is repeatedly employed as equivalent to the Shekinah. But Jesus Christ is called by John the 'Logos' or 'Word.' 'In the beginning was the Word,' &c. And have we not now obtained an adequate solution to this title as applied to him, without going out of the bounds of the established Jewish usus loquendi? It is not indeed to be doubted, that the Platonising fathers of the church made a very early prey of this word and wrought it into the tissue of their mystic philosophy, as a personification of the divine Reason or Wisdom—a circumstance which has led commentators to see in John's use of the term some profound allusion to the dreams and dogmas of the Gnostic heresy. But this, we conceive, is nothing else than reading inspired truth through heathen glasses. The meaning of any word or phrase, says Mr. Upham (Let. on the Logos, p. 89), is 'always to be sought, and can only be discovered, in the sources from which its use originated. 'Logos' is a Jewish expression. To the Jews must we go to ascertain its import. Inquirers and writers on this subject have, in general, failed to establish the true interpretation, by directing all their researches to the heathen systems in which the (term) Logos is used, instead of descending beyond them to the Hebrew Theology, from which they borrowed it.' With the clue before us, we are enabled without difficulty to explain this title as appropriated to Christ. He was 'The Word' in the most emphatic and preeminent sense. He was the great organ of communication between heaven and earth. He was the divine Declarer of his Father's purposes of grace and redemption to lost men. Indeed, there can be no doubt, that all previous divine communications and appearances were prospective, preparative, and preintimative in their scope, pointing to him who was subsequently to come forth from the bosom of the Godhead and *tabernacle* or *shekinize* in our nature as the incarnate 'Word.' Accordingly we are told by the apostle, Heb. 1. 1, that 'God who at sundry times and in divers manners *spake* in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in those last days, *spoken* unto us by his Son.' He was appointed to discharge between God and man in a preeminent manner the same office which *words* discharge between man and man. He was to be the proclaimer of his mercy, the revealer of his character, and at the same time, the representative, the likeness, the image of his attributes. In a word, he was to be 'God manifest

in the flesh.' 'In him was to dwell all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' An we shall have no difficulty in interpreting those lofty predicates of him whic we find in the proem of John's gospel, if we bear in mind that the same equivalent language is unreservedly used in the Old Testament of the Shekinah the 'Word' of that dispensation. Under the dictation of the Holy Spirit th august titles Jehovah, Jehovah God, Jehovah of Hosts, Angel of the Presence &c., are again and again applied to the visible symbol of the Shekinah, and a the acts and attributes proper to the Supreme God, the Creator of the world, an the object of all religious worship, most freely ascribed to it. So truly then a the Shekinah of the earlier economy is identified with the Jehovah of the Ol Testament, and the Shekinah is the same as 'The Word' that was made flesh so truly is Jesus Christ also the Jehovah of the inspired Scriptures, 'God over al and blessed for ever.'

To those who may be desirous of extending their inquiries on this subject, th following works will be found replete with interesting views and reasonings:— Lowman's Three Tracts on the Shekinah; Allix's Judgment of the Ancien Jewish Church against the Unitarians; Ben Mordecai's Letters; and the Rev C. W. Upham's Letters on the Logos. With several of the conclusions of this latter gentleman we find it impossible to coincide, but we feel no hesitation nevertheless, in awarding to his little volume on the Shekinah and the Logos the praise of an elaborate and candid research into the whole subject, and of an able comparative estimate of the lights thrown upon it by sacred and ecclesiasti tical antiquity. But the theme is one of sufficient importance to demand a far more extended investigation than it has ever yet received. We are persuaded it is destined to furnish a key to the solution of some of the profoundest mysteries of revelation. Among English commentators we know of no one, except Patrick, who seems to have had any adequate idea of what is really involved in the re corded theophanies of the Old Testament.

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